

AN 11c E.d.

INQUIRY

INTO

The SPIRIT and TENDENCY

OF

Letters on Theron and Aspasio;

WITH

A VIEW of The LAW of NATURE,

AND

An INQUIRY into *Letters on The Law
of Nature.*

ENTERED IN STATIONERS HALL.

L O N D O N.

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INQUIRY

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THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE LAW

OF

THE LAW OF THE LAND



A VIEW OF THE LAW OF THE LAND

AND

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P R E F A C E

By the EDITOR.

THE Author of *Letters on Theron and As-
pasto*, having taken upon him to set up
his Notions as the standard and universal test of
orthodoxy, and to bring the most criminal
charges against many eminently learned and
pious men: — The following sheets, wrote
by an eminent Minister of the Church of Scot-
land, are published with an intention to obviate
the many gross mistakes of the Letter-writer;
and to prevent the influence that his subtle a-
buse of the Sacred Writings may have, on some
of those into whose hands his Books may have
fallen.

After giving a summary view of the Letter-
writer's character of those whom he calls Popu-
lar Preachers, and their doctrine; our Author
proceeds to shew, that the Letter-writer's own
doctrines are inconsistent with the plan of Reve-
lation: that his explication of several passages
of Scripture, with regard to the Divine Law, are
subversive of the Gospel; and that his account
of *Faith* is not only erroneous and perplexed,
but clogged with worse consequences than these
he pretends to derive from what he calls the po-
pular doctrine.

The

The Author of the above mentioned Letters, some time after, published another set of Letters; under the Title of, *The Law of Nature defended by Scripture.*

In this last performance, he makes his view of the Law of Nature so essential to support his view of the Gospel, in his Letters on The-ron and Aspasio,--that the Author of the following sheets has judged it necessary to be very minute in his Inquiry into that point.

It will be admitted, That there is a great difference between discovering an *Unknown Truth*, and finding out decisive arguments to establish a *Known Truth*. It is the want of this Distinction, or an Inattention to it, that has given birth to so many unsatisfactory volumes as have been published upon the subject of the Light or Law of Nature. But, of all the various hypotheses that have been advanced, by the Writers upon this point; none have deserved the serious inquiry of Christians so much, as those which pretend to derive it from the Bible. The Letter-writer has made his notion about it the basis of Revelation; and has palmed many absurd senses upon the Scriptures, in order to support the same. These, it is believed, the Reader will here find are very accurately examined.

If we confine ourselves to the Bible, the argument is reduced to a very narrow compass. It will be only requisite to determine,

1. Whether Revelation, which every where asserts, that the Works of Creation contain clear documents of the glory and perfections of the Creator,---has any where asserted, that these Works contain any evidence that they were created: For it is one thing to discover that any thing was made; and quite another, upon knowing a thing to be made, to discover by the work the abilities of the Maker. A Creator once acknowledged, even by the most thoughtless of mankind,--lays him under the imputation of the most criminal and inexcusable stupidity, if he does not discover his wonderful perfections in the smallest pile of grass.

2. It is only further necessary to determine, What is meant by *nature* in the Scripture; and what knowledge or principles can be properly called *natural*.

The Author of the following sheets, whose Abilities will commend themselves to his Readers, says, That all these *means* which man, by his constitution and circumstances, is actually subjected to, in order to form his rational powers and convey instruction and information to him, are the *natural conveyance* of knowledge to man; and consequently, what he knows by these means,--is *natural knowledge*.

On the other hand, the Letter-writer affirms, 1. That natural knowledge is what a man knows without reasoning†. 2. That this

† Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 70. 269.

this knowledge is Conscience, Intuition, Instinct, an Impression from external objects; it is one, or other, or all of these. The Reader has this odd medley set in a proper light, with the arguments on both sides.

Whatever judgment the Reader shall form upon the Author's views of this subject; it will be necessary, for that end, that he peruse the whole, or no part of it.

To conclude, it may not be amiss to remark, That the Letter-writer has a peculiar dexterity in waving the points that press hard upon him; and turning the Reader's attention upon quirks or perversions of words, which never entered into the thoughts of those he means to condemn: and, after he has tortured their words into his own gloss, of posting them up as enemies to *the Truth*; while he would have it believed that he is its humble friend.

ERRATA.

- P. 108. l. 35. For fables read genealogies.
 116. l. 27. f. distinguish r. distinguishes.
 145. l. 7. 8. read to it; unless limited by the context. There
 148. l. 11. f. he r. the.
 32. f. will r. would.

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A N

SECRET

1. The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various committees of the House of Representatives, during the session of 1874-75.

A N
I N Q U I R Y
I N T O
The SPIRIT and TENDENCY
O F
Letters on Theron and Aspasio.
W I T H
A VIEW of the LAW of NATURE.

WHEN keen disputants, such as the Author of the *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, take upon them to make their appeals to the world, it were much to be wished, that they would consider with some attention what their antagonists have said, as well as what themselves mean to say. Many a laboured volume the world should have wanted, and much mischief would have been prevented, had the contending parties been masters of as much patience as was necessary to their understanding one another.

The Author of the Letters, lately issued a pamphlet, under the pompous title of *The Law of Nature defended by Scripture*. In this piece, if his word may
A be

he taken for it, he tells us, that the question he is so very warm upon, proceeds, at least partly, on a vain strife about words; and I am persuaded, all who know any thing of the matter, will be of the same opinion. This, however, we may safely say, That *many take upon them to be teachers of the law, who yet know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* Whether the author is one of them, any man of plain understanding, who will undergo the drudgery of perusing his publications, as he calls them, with any degree of attention, will easily determine.

When I first heard of this boasted performance, my curiosity was so much raised, that, without further reflection, I ordered it to be sent me. I had heard much, and read part of what had been wrote under the title of the *Law of Nature*; and finding those, who profess to understand it best, at irreconcilable variance about the very principles and foundations on which it should stand, I had long been of opinion, that, as it has been generally treated by our late masters in moral science, it is not only a very idle, but a most pernicious study; as it tends directly to draw off our attention from the only sure foundations of truth and duty, to build upon speculations which have neither authority nor evidence enough to support either. But could such a law be instructed from Scripture, every Christian must acquiesce in the decision, whatever objections or difficulties might seem to lie against it.

From some knowledge I had of these writings, and the attempts I had seen made of this kind, I cannot say my expectations were very high. But this I thought I had reason to expect, that the whole strength of the cause should be laid together, in some suitableness unto these sacred sources from which he pretended to draw his evidences. But how was I disappointed? when I found nothing but scraps of private letters, oddly put together; and published, as appears, without either the consent, or even the knowledge

knowledge of those who wrote them: *Junius* and *Lucius*, the heroes of the farce, who, right or wrong, are to carry all before them; and the poor Gentlemen brought upon the field, much as the Roman criminals were, to be worried by wild beasts. Our publisher had found his account in this sort of traffick; in a former publication; where we are given to know, how R. S. made a convert of S. P. to the astonishment of all the world; who know no more of the matter than what is to be found in their Letters. And as he might be well assured, the Gentlemen he has now dragged into the field, would never appear publicly against such an adversary, he might flatter himself, reasonably enough, with a fresh opportunity of boasting of the unanswerable strength of his writings, among his too credulous admirers.

For mine own part, as I know not the man, nor ever had any correspondence with him, directly or indirectly; I can have no resentment, but what is occasioned by finding the spirit of *Palamon** resting so superabundantly on these same *Junius* and *Lucius*†; and a just compassion for a number of well-meaning honest people, who, I am told, are in danger of being entangled by the solemn insolence of his address, and high pretensions to the true Apostolical Christianity.

As I judged it necessary, for this reason, to make some cursory remarks on the spirit and tendency of *Palamon's* Letters; *Junius* has very happily saved me some part of the trouble, in the account he gives of the spirit which he approves, and even applauds in a writer, such as never was approved before, and I hope never will be after him; which he gives us in two branches‡.

A 2

“ 1. I

* The name assumed by the Author of the *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*.

† The names he assumes in his *Law of Nature defended*.

‡ *Law of Nature*, p. 3.

“ 1. I think it ridiculous to find fault with his
 “ spirit, if his doctrine be just and true: For to me it
 “ is evident, that if his spirit is faulty, it must be
 “ owing to some error in his doctrine. 2. I am not
 “ displeased to see a man, in matters of the highest
 “ importance, holding what he holds in the most
 “ tenacious manner, or opposing what he condemns
 “ with the utmost vehemence, &c.”

No body sure will be so foolish, as to enter a public dispute on any point which he does not reckon of very great, if not of the highest importance. Whenever then this worthy man takes it into his head to display his talents in that way, he must reckon himself at liberty to exert all that malignity of spirit, which the most enormous pride and rancorous malice can suggest. For you must be sure his doctrine is just and true, at least in his own eyes. And when, like Solomon's madman, he scatters firebrands, arrows and death; vain must all attempts be to stop his furious career: For he reckons himself bound to hold what he holds in the most tenacious manner, and to oppose what he condemns with the utmost vehemence.

I cannot say positively, nor will I pretend to guess, what he means, in the maxim he professes to found on, viz. “ That one's spirit cannot be faulty, unless
 “ there is some error in his doctrine.” But if it holds true, and the Spirit which breaths in the New Testament is allowed to be right; he will be found, one of the most grossly erroneous writers ever appeared in public.

It cannot be said, however, that his practice contradicts his profession; as he has given the most ample proofs of the stiffest and most dogmatical tenaciousness, and the most furious vehemence in his opposition. Nor can I perceive the least restraint upon his spirit, from any quarter or law whatsoever, natural or revealed.

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

Palæmon's character of Mr. Hervey, and other Popular Preachers, considered. His character of his own party.

THE first I find him exerting his talents upon, is the late excellent Mr. HERVEY; the man in the world, who, by his own confession, had given him the least provocation. He had said almost every thing unexceptionably well; so well, that *Palæmon* acknowledges, he had set the great truths of the Gospel in a fairer and juster light than all that had gone before him: and much sullen flattery he bedaubs him with, almost upon every mention of *ASPASIO*, from the beginning to the end of his Six Epistles. But, as was observed by a great Wit of the last age on just such another writer, he never oyles his bone but to sharp his razor, and that not to shave with but to cut throats. Every compliment he makes him, serves only to introduce some new charge, and the very grossest imputations. And be sure he deserved them all! For he was either so ignorant as not to know *Palæmon's* standard of orthodoxy, or so perverse as not to comply with it.

He must be master of more penetration than I can pretend to; who will take it upon him to say peremptorily what are the real sentiments of the author of the Letters on the points which he has huddled together. But there is one, which the whole of his declamation appears very evidently designed to establish, and which he contends for with the greatest vehemence, *viz.* That the gospel of Christ has never been rightly understood since the Apostles left the world, until his friend and he happily discovered the ancient truth, and erected a church on the right Apostolical plan." It is true, as he professes a mortal

enmity against philosophy and human science, he does not proceed in that formal pedantic method your bungling philosophers and systematical divines do; who will not advance a step, until they have stated distinctly what they propose to demonstrate or prove: The loose declamatory method, besides that it is more fashionable, answers his purpose greatly better: Where the reader, before he can know his design, finds himself forced into a conclusion, which, had he seen it naked, might have been rejected with indignation; and thus we find the case stands, as he has laid it.

The time since the Apostles left the world divides naturally into three distinct periods.—That which immediately succeeded to them, which is commonly called the primitive church;—the middle ages, when Ignorance, and, its inseparable companion, Superstition, overspread the whole face of the earth;—and the time that has passed since the commencement of what we call the Reformation.

The first period, the ages in which those we call the Fathers lived, seems to stand fairest: But *Palæmon* assures us, that these same fathers were only explainers of the Christian doctrine by the Platonic philosophy; that is, such corrupters of it, that there is more of the true Apostolical Christianity to be learned from *Celsus*, its capital enemy, than from all of them put together. Nothing can be said for the middle ages. And as for what we call the Reformation; *
 “ we Protestants have indeed renounced the gross
 “ idolatry of our Popish fathers; even as the Jews
 “ returned from Babylon did that of their forefathers:
 “ Yet we have closely imitated the Jews contempor-
 “ ary with Christ and his Apostles, in their notions
 “ of the divine character; and in their connecting
 “ their temporal interest with their religion, or their
 “ zeal for a worldly kingdom for their Messiah, &c.—
 “ We have laid aside the crucifix; we retain no frag-
 “ ments

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 82. 85. 400.

“ments of the wood of the cross: But what have we got instead thereof? a perverted Gospel, &c.” and all that we have left us, he has assured us over and over, is no better than the Law of works, and nothing near so good as his Law of nature. Some faint glimmerings appeared among the first Reformers, while they were under persecution; but these were effectually extinguished by the Synod of *Dort*: And the zealous opposers of Arminianism brought in another gospel, and another way of preaching; by which the Apostolic truth was entirely lost. And since that time every day has brought in new corruptions; insomuch that “The Law of Moses, Natural Religion, and what is called the Gospel, are all upon a level.”

But there is a certain set of men *, whom, for reasons obvious enough, he has seen fit to distinguish from those he calls philosophical Divines, and those he calls fashionable preachers, by the title of *Popular Preachers*. The former he makes light work of; *Erasmus, Locke, Tillotson, Hutchison*, and the rest of them, he reckons so near of kind with the gross *Pelagians*, that they give him no disturbance: and accordingly he treats them with great civility. But these same popular preachers approach so near what himself calls the ancient Gospel, that great numbers of honest well meaning people, and even Mr *Hervey* himself, have been imposed upon, and led away from the pure Apostolic Gospel. And by the account he gives of them, it is little wonder; for he tells us, “they are not of those who have employed their weapons against the person and work of Christ:—But these teachers insist largely on the corruption of human nature, conclude the whole world guilty before God, eloquently set forth the necessity of the atonement, and zealously maintain the Scripture-doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ” †. If the question was put, “What lack they yet?” it would not

* *Guthrie, Marshall, Boston, Doddridge, Erskines, &c.*

† Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 8. 9.

not be easy for a man of ordinary abilities to find an answer ; nor do I find him so much as attempting it. But there are two things he has to say, which answer his purpose as well, viz. that “ After all they leave “ us just as much in the dark as to our comfort, as “ if Jesus Christ had never appeared, and mark out “ for us as insuperable a task, as if Jesus had never “ finished his work.” And again, That, at the same time that “ they assert almost every branch of the “ Christian doctrine ; yet he can fairly shew a complete system of self-dependance contained in the “ same treatises, yea to be the leading scope and design of them *.——And thus they deceitfully clog “ them with the opposite falshoods,” which he compares, in his fanciful way, “ to a chain having one “ link of gold and another of brass alternately ; or a “ twofold cord, wherein one thread of truth and another of falshood are inseparably twisted together.”

The first of these complaints is so much the same with that which the patrons of universal redemption support their plan by, that it will be found to bear harder upon *Palamon* himself, than those he opposes. Neither will the task he sets to his followers, however easy he represents it, be found a jot easier than theirs, but differing far more widely than theirs from that which Christ set to his disciples.

ASPASIO and his friends do indeed maintain, That, throughout the whole constitution of grace, there is a line of truth, and another of duty, inseparably twisted together ; and accordingly their doctrine is indeed every where double, which this author every now and then breaks his jests on: But I dare venture to say, that it is not more so than the sacred Record from which they copy it.

But

* P. 19. at the foot.

But however that be, it is against these men that he has exerted all the arts of eloquence he is master of, in a declamatory invective of four hundred and eighty four pages. Their insufferable vanity in pretending a divine institution for their office, is laid as the foundation, on which they insolently assume the character, and give themselves all the airs of ambassadors*. They set up,

* As *Palæmon* greatly insults the popular preachers for assuming to themselves in particular the title of *Ambassadors*, it may be worth any neutral person's while to examine if he is one bit behind them in arrogance, by assuming to himself the character and dignity of a *Preacher*; or if a *Preacher* in the New Testament is not authorised to declare every thing in the same terms, and with the same authority, as an *Ambassador*. They are both declarers of God's message and Gospel to sinners; and *Palæmon* is not able to prove, that an *Ambassador* was empowered to deliver it in any terms, or with any authority, which a *Preacher* was not likewise obliged in duty to use. So that, while the popular preachers call themselves *Ambassadors*, and he calls himself a *Preacher*; the only point to be adjusted between them is, which of them are charged with a message from God to mankind, (as that is the general import of both the original words for *Ambassador* and *Preacher*): For if the Scripture gives any gracious calls to sinners; and if it charges them to deliver any such message; they, whether as *Ambassadors* or *Preachers*, must be charged with it in the same terms.—So that the accusation of arrogance rebounds upon himself; and he has given copious instances of his pronouncing (not proving) his doctrines with as much solemnity as the most stately *Ambassador* among them. It is further worthy of notice, that the word which is translated *being an Ambassador*, is, in its etymology, more nearly related with the duty of an *Elder*, than any other Greek word used for bearing God's message to mankind. When the word *Elder* refers to office, it properly signifies to act the Old Man or the Elder. The reason why, in the Greek, the word *Elder* is used to express an office, seems to be, because the aged, as the most honourable and prudent, were generally employed in hearing and delivering the most weighty and important messages.

up, he says, for a sort of factors between God and man; and their whole business is, to cook up the Gospel of Christ to the lusts and passions of their hearers: and, as they are sworn enemies to the belief of the truth as the sole ground of hope, they leave no stone unturned to interrupt the light of the sacred truth, and decoy our attention to abominable jargon. They wilfully throw the Apostles doctrine into a mist, that their hearers may not perceive it; and tarnish every text they quote. They are implacable enemies to the divine justice and sovereignty; and, of all things, they abhor the nakedness of the cross of Christ, until it is dressed up with their own inventions. Their holiness is all hypocrisy, or self-justifying labour; their doctrine, a castle in the air; and their faith, a wish or a guess; any thing, every thing, or nothing. These demagogues have done more mischief to the souls of men, than all the infidels, free-thinkers and libertines put together; nor does he know any sinners more hardened, or greater destroyers of mankind, than they. The further we search into the mysteries and depths of their doctrine, we shall find yet greater abominations: they deny the God that is above, and set up and worship another God, another Christ and another Spirit*. If any chuses to go to hell by a devout path, rather than any other, let him form his heart upon their discourses and writings.—If any prophane person, who desires to be converted, enters into their spirit; he can easily shew from the New Testament, that he thereby becomes twofold more the child of hell than he was before†.

It must be acknowledged no easy matter to carry a charge against the very worst of mankind higher, than this short specimen of the character *Palæmon* has laboured to fix upon these unhappy men: And it is no more

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 19. 20. 22. 40. 41. 185. 277. 327. 333. 347. 371. 375. 405. 476.

† P. 436.

more than a specimen: nothing in comparison to what it appears with the decorations and embellishments; and the peculiar manner and address with which he sets it off; which would require a volume, at least double the bulk of his, to give a tolerable idea of.

Wherever he can find a character generally acknowledged very bad, such as the Idolaters among the old Israelites; the attachment of the later Jews to the law of Moses and a secular kingdom for their Messiah; the Pharisees in our Saviour's time with their heaven, which our Lord warns his disciples against; the Jews who crucified the Son of God; and persisted in their incredulity and hatred to his character; the men of Nazareth; the nine Lepers, with a number more; the Hereticks of later times; the gross Pelagians; the philosophical Divines and fashionable Preachers, whom he reckons much of a kind with them; the philosophers and natural-religion men; the Free-thinkers, Sceptics, and Libertines: these are all saints, when compared with Mr *Hervey*, and the other popular preachers; yea greatly more consistent, and much honest men. No matter how wide the difference is: He has a knack, much like the bed that *Procrustes* is fabled to have measured his guests by, which is sure to bring them together. Abatements and deductions on one side, and aggravations on the other, will do the business effectually: And sure there never was a man more dextrous at contrasting characters in this way. The old Idolaters were but a sort of types of the Popular Preachers,* and what was spoken by the old Prophets against the former, was really meant of them. The Pharisees, or later Jews, were by no means such bad men as our ignorance or malice represents them; and, upon the whole, had much better grounds for their ingrossing the divine favour, and appropriating the kingdom of heaven to themselves, than any who live under the Gospel have to apply any part of it to themselves.

Nay,

* Letters on Theron, &c. p. 50. 78. 180. 214. &c.

Nay, he can make those same Popular Preachers rather worse than the Devil himself: and a very curious history he gives us of him; where he treats him with a civility he has been very little accustomed to*. He will not call him by any of these names, which have been made familiar terms of reproach; but very politely "a certain great genius or spirit, all magnanimity and greatness of soul;" while the wicked Popular Preachers, and their followers, possess all the malignity that is commonly attributed to him.

I may not stand to observe, how he racks ASPASIO and his friends, to bring them to the standard he has fixed for their character. Every weakness he can find in any part of their conduct; every loose or unguarded expression that may have escaped them in popular discourses; whatever disjointed scraps he can pick out of their writings, which can (by either fair or foul means) be screwed into the meaning he wants them to bear; these he picked up, and tortured with all the ingenuity the most imbibtered malice could suggest; to make them say, what of all things they most abhorred, and what the whole spirit of their writings is levelled against. And then, as he has a great knack at coining ridiculous images, their doctrine, and the practice of it, their grace, their conversion and regeneration, their holiness, devotion and piety, (for he spares nothing), is like this, or that, or the other foolish thing: so that his reader will find occasion for more firmness of mind than falls to every one's share, to keep him from being carried away by that flood of drollery and burlesque, which runs in an impetuous stream from the beginning to the end of his declamation; that one could almost swear he was an adept in that wonderful philosophy, which makes ridicule the test of truth, and a piece of impudent buffoonry an unanswerable argument. But in
one

* P. 218. *et seqq.*

one thing he has greatly the advantage of them all; that, in the midst of his gaiety and drollery, he assumes the dignity of one of the old Prophets or Apostles; and, if we may believe him, the very spirit of John Baptist rests upon him; the same Spirit that inspired the Apostles with undaunted zeal, to support and suffer for that truth which the whole world hates and despises*. And every now and then, we find him justifying the grossest of his ironies by their example.

But it is not ASPASIO and the Popular Preachers alone, that the fury of his zeal is pointed against. There is one contrast which he never loses sight of; between his own, which he affects to represent as the despised, hated and persecuted party,—and all other churches in the world, whether such as are established by law, or Dissenters of every kind; for with him there is no difference. They are all of them those whom we find designed in the New Testament by the general title of the *world*; only with this difference, that they are the kingdom of Antichrist. And, on the account of something of venerable solemnity about them, of all things they are likest the Temple of Solomon turned into an exchange. But he and his followers are the chosen witnesses for the ancient Apostolic faith; the only Christians who can rank with those the Apostle John speaks of, *who know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth*; the only remainder of the seed of the woman who have the testimony of Jesus; the only church on earth who have any regard to the commandments of Christ purely on his authority, and because he has commanded them.

Upon the whole, if one is to rely on his authority for the truth of his assertions; who can avoid concluding,
B
ding,

* Letters on Theron &c. P. 142. 245. 480. &c.

ding, that it would be the greatest happiness the world could be blessed with, to have all the writings of these naughty men, that is, all that has ever been written since the days of the Apostles, all the books and manuscripts in being, consumed to ashes in one great bonfire; excepting only such as he and his friend have condescended to instruct and enlighten the world by.

He has seen fit likewise to except the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles; to each of whom he has assigned his peculiar use. But Moses and the Prophets *, the writings of the Old Testament, seem rather to be dangerous pieces: For he has nothing to say of them, but a caution against what he calls a private interpretation of them. The Apostle indeed says, "That no prophecy in Scripture is of its own interpretation," or to be understood by itself. And as the whole of the Old Testament is either strictly prophetic, or typical and exemplary, which is but another kind of prophecy; the only proper construction and interpretation of them, must arise from comparing them with the events in which they have their fulfilment in the New. But then, it must be remembered, that the wicked popular preachers have tarnished every text they have quoted; and their writings are so stuffed with quotations, that very few, if any, will be found to have escaped their hands. There is therefore no security against seduction, but what he has very charitably provided us with in the close of his Epistles; where he applies ASPASIO's note about beggars to them, with great elegance and propriety to be sure! "Let us be deaf to their most importunate clamours; and assure ourselves, that, by this determined inflexibility, we do God, we do our community, we do them, the most substantial service †." I do not choose to transcribe the rest; but it must still be remembered, that dutiful recourse must be had to PALÆMON and his friends, for pur-
ging

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 437. † P. 476.

ging out the old leaven which we may have been tainted with.

SECT. II.

Palæmon's doctrine, and his charge against the Popular Preachers, examined.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the polemical skill *Palæmon* is master of, and it must be acknowledged he is a very great master; yet there are two or three things, wherein he seems not to have managed his point with such circumspection as the ticklishness of the case should have required.

For, in the first place, he has pushed his premises rather too far; so that the conclusion which naturally follows, will appear to a modest reader much too bold and daring. It is true, he has taken his precautions. Through the whole course of his declamation, he has, both by his own example, and often repeated documents, strongly inculcated, that modesty and diffidence are no virtues, in the present case at least; and that it is impossible either to acquire or maintain the right Apostolical spirit, and that measure of zeal which is necessary to hold fast the salutary truth, without a sovereign contempt of all mankind who will not be of our opinion. Let none therefore imagine, that his often repeated invectives against the insolent pretensions of the Popular Preachers, and the dignity they assume, is meant against the thing itself; but only that it is employed on the wrong side. For he must be a very inadyertent Reader who cannot observe, without being told it, that never a popular preacher, no not *Dr Crisp* and *Mr Romain* himself*, ever strutted in the pulpit with half the assumed dignity and solemn airs of Apostolical

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 446. 45c.

cal authority which he has displayed in his Six Epistles.

But let the worst that can happen, let him be treated with the utmost contempt, or even hatred and persecution; he has taken his measures so wisely, that it shall be so far from hurting his authority, that it will be the strongest evidence of the truth and righteousness of his cause: For, after a multitude of strong hints occasionally scattered through his performance, he tells us expressly*, “If the leading sentiment in these sheets shall prove acceptable to any party having, or desiring to have the public leading in religion; there will thence arise the strongest ground to suspect, that either I have greatly mistaken the Apostles, or that my Readers have greatly mistaken me.” And thus he has no more to do, but repeat, on every occasion, the Apostle’s words: *They are of the world—and the world beareth them: We are of God: He that knoweth God, beareth us: He that is not of God, beareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and of error.*

But, by the account himself has given of the doctrine taught by the men he opposes so vehemently, and especially when he tells us, “They set forth the necessity of the atonement, and zealously maintain the Scripture doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ;” he has laid a sore temptation in his Reader’s way, to try impartially, whether his superstructure on this, which is on both sides allowed to be the right foundation, or that which they are charged with, be most agreeable to the doctrine of the Apostles; who are the only men who had any right to speak the above words, of themselves: And, by placing ASPASIO at the head of them, he has put it in every one’s power who pleases to satisfy himself. Had we been left to ransack the numerous volumes he quotes from, ere we could be sure whether they were justly

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 480.

justly or unjustly charged; few would have thought it worth such immense labour. But, as ASPASIO is really as obnoxious as any, and even more than most of them are; one may satisfy himself with great ease, by the perusal of these very entertaining, as well as instructive Dialogues. And by the heads of complaint we observed, and what he further observes of the two things he is especially displeased with in ASPASIO's doctrine; the whole of the difference might, one would think, have been adjusted in the twentieth part of *Palæmon's* volume: for thus he tells us*; "The passages in the *Dialogues* which appear to deserve the severest censure are these two, which, in a very confident manner, deny, the one, comfort attending the simple belief of the Gospel; and the other, the additional comfort attending self-denied obedience to it †."

Had *Palæmon* done what he says it behooved him to have done, in order to set his grand charge of corrupting the Gospel in its proper light; and shown first the design and tendency of the Gospel:—The difference between the God of the Popular Preachers, and the God whose character is drawn in the New Testament; betwixt their Christ, and the Christ preached by the Apostles; betwixt their Spirit, and the Spirit which breathed in the lives and writings of the Apostles; in short, betwixt their sense of the words, Grace, Conversion, Regeneration, Holiness, Charity, Church, Kingdom of God, &c †: Had this been done, the whole must have stood in a very glaring light. Or had he but stated fairly his difference with ASPASIO, and particularly their several notions of faith and believing, on which the whole appears to depend; one might have been able to form some judgment about it. But this, it would seem, was no part of his business: For he appears industriously to have thrown the whole into

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such

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 429 † P. 40.

such confusion, as most Readers shall either want patience or abilities to clear up.

He begins, one would think, in a pretty promising way. After some quotations from the Dialogues, he singles out ASPASIO's account of faith; which indeed admits of the most plausible objections of any I know made use of by the men he wants to expose, *viz.* That every one should believe that Christ dyed for him. This *Palamon*, in his fanciful way, compares to an arch, with one end founded upon a rock, and another on sand and mud; which must need a great many subsidiary props to support it, and, after all, is apt to be carried away with every land-flood. Who would not have expected to find the true Apostolical faith stated and contrasted with this, which he reckons a corruption of it, and both ends of the arch fixed with equal firmness? But, instead of that, he spends his whole Second Letter in a ridiculous burlesque on an imagination of his own; which, as he would have us believe, is the subsidiary prop which the Popular Preachers support their faith by. He tells us, with as much confidence as if it was real truth, That it stands partly on the grave affirmation and earnest call of one, whom, in his sneering way, he calls a Devout and Reverend Preacher; partly on the pains taken to believe, and especially on the secret whisper of some private antisciptural Spirit: and he diverts himself, with abundance of drollery, upon the ridiculous appearance which he pretends they make.

In his Third Letter, he would make us believe he is just going to enter upon his plea with ASPASIO; and boasts greatly of the advantage he was like to have over him, by having only one thing to mind, while he must have a great many. But, instead of telling us what his *one thing* is, we are put off with a sort of novel; the conversion of Jonathan the Jew, first a Sadducee, then a Pharisee. I hoped, from the way of bringing it in, to have found the rise and whole progress of faith exemplified in this history: but could learn

learn no more by it, but that the Pharisees were a most excellent and vastly amiable set of men; so virtuous, so holy and devout, that all our modern Christians are nothing when compared to them; and that Jonathan, with great difficulty, was at last brought to believe, That Jesus was really raised from the dead, and indeed the Christ.

At last, after a very long rhapsody, under three titles, Mystery, Reason and Spirit, with which he tells us he will occupy his Fourth Letter; in his Fifth, he gives new hopes, by his professing to speak directly on the point. And, after some remarks, which will be easily allowed, viz. That the Apostles used the words *faith* and *believing* in the same sense as we do to this day in common discourse: That when one believes a true testimony, he becomes possessed of a truth, and that truth may be said to be his faith: That, as the whole efficacy of Faith flows from the nature and importance of what he believes, he who is justified by faith †, is justified by what he believes; with some other dubious expressions —

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† It ought however to be particularly observed here, that this writer deals too much in imposing sophistical quirks upon ambiguous words; and, by giving a false cast to their plain and ordinary signification, presumes to change the meaning of the Scriptures. The exercise of several of our senses, and of several of the actions of our minds, are expressed by terms which, by prefixing some demonstrative particle, signify also the object or subject of such sense or mental action: For example, Sight, Taste, Thought, Reflection, — a Sight, a Taste, a Thought, a Reflection. But will any person be so weak as to believe *Palatation*; if he should take it into his head to assert, — That wherever the word *Sight* is to be found in Scripture, it means the Thing seen, and not Seeing: Yet in this manner he treats the word *Faith*; which never properly and directly signifies the thing believed, but when it is determined by some demonstrative prefix, generally *the*; as, *THE faith of God's Elect*, *denied THE Faith — the unity of THE Faith*; — but without some such demonstrative

He concludes, " Let us then lay aside all questions
 " about faith, or how a man believes; and let the
 " only question be, what he believes, and what sense
 " does he put upon the Apostolic doctrine" *. And
 now, one would think, we should surely be told what
 we are to believe. But, instead of pursuing the inquiry
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demonstrative prefix, it, I may say universally, immediately
 and directly means *believing*: So that, tho' he should have
 no other shift for reducing the language of the Scriptures to
 orthodoxy, he must give up with that. *By Faith we know*
that the worlds were made by the word of God: Must we
 paraphrase this *Faith* by the thing believed? by this, that
the worlds were made by the word of God,-- which is the thing
 believed? Is it the thing believed, or believing, which the
 Holy Ghost means in his general definition of faith, Heb.
 xi. 1.? This was clearly objected to *Palemon* by Mr
Westy, when he told him, that *faith* was no more the thing
 believed, than light was seeing, which was a most just
 parallel. But *Palemon* beats off every thing he objects,
 by retailing, *Answer him not*,— he is a notour blasphemer,
 and therefore every objection he makes is blasphemy, not
 to be answered.— True evasive sophistry! And is this the
 way, *Palemon*! you are to answer objections, and sup-
 port the truth you profess to defend? It were to be wished,
 that with regard both to Mr *Westy* and others, you had
 remembered,— that a more dignified person than the pro-
 fessed Angel of any church, brought no railing accusation
 against Satan, when he did blaspheme; as also, that tho'
 Satan was a blasphemer, the Son of God himself conde-
 scended to reason with him, and to overthrow by Scripture
 his specious arguments from Scripture, when he endeavoured
 to reason.

There is another similar false representation of the sense of
 a word, which *Palemon* has made the ground or title of a
 long dissertation in his work; and which might be passed
 as a conceit of no importance, but for that disposition he
 shews to magnify mere sophistries into important discoveries.
Mystery, we are now informed by *Palemon*, means the
 hidden

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 300. 304.

as he had stated it, — he shoves us off with a remark or two, on believing with the heart, and believing in vain; and so turns off to his main business, by contrasting the Popular Preachers with the men of Nazareth, the nine Lepers, Simon the Pharisee, and a long dissertation on the case of the penitent thief, &c. which are all master-pieces in their kind. And after all we are left to guess at what he would have us believe, by what he has occasionally thrown out in the course of his invectives against ASPASIO and his friends.

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hidden sense of a figure, or the explication of a figure, There cannot be a greater blunder than this. *Mystery* signifies a figure, riddle, or parable, containing a further implied sense; and to know a *Mystery*, is to know the meaning of the mystery. A *parable* is not the hidden sense of a dark saying; neither is a *riddle* the interpretation of such an allegorical proposition: Yet, to know the parables of the kingdom of heaven, means the same thing with knowing the mysteries thereof; for our Lord says, *How then will you know all parables*, Mark iv. 13. meaning, how will you know their sense. Matth. xiii. 18. *Hear the parable* (meaning the interpretation of the parable) *of the sower*. And *Sampson*, when he demanded the interpretation of his Riddle, said, *Shew me my riddle*, meaning the interpretation thereof. But to tell people, that because knowing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, means knowing the sense of such figures; therefore the word *Mystery* signifies the implied sense of the figure, and not the figure itself covering that sense, is absurd trifling. At the same time, for once I agree with *Palamon* in thinking, that the Scripture-sense of the word *mystery* is much abused, when it is applied to express what is plainly revealed, but what some may take the liberty to call in question, because they cannot conceive and explain it to their own satisfaction; for, in that case, they may with equal justice call in question the union of a body and a spirit into one person; which, in spite of their own philosophy, they are forced to believe; tho' it is as inconceivable to them, as three being one, God manifested in the flesh, or liberty and necessity.

As he is very dextrous at proving what no body can have any doubt about; he proves, in a very convincing manner, that nothing can be a proper object of faith but a divine testimony: But when we want to know what is testified, that we may know precisely what we are to believe, *Palæmon* tells us; it is the truth. A very important discovery! which he sets off with a variety of epithets; The *simple truth*, the *bare truth*, the *ancient or apostolic truth*, the *merciful truth*, the *saving or salutary truth*; and oftneft the *rejected, despised or hated truth*. But until we know what this same truth is, the solemn sound of his epithets may make the simple stare, and excite a sort of confused perturbation; but will never make them one jot either wiser or better.

If he would seem at any time to be more particular, we are told, “ It is the truth which our Lord confessed before Pilate; that Jesus is the Christ; the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; that he has done all, and left us nothing to do; the saving or merciful truth, which quiets as soon as known; the atonement; the bare or naked cross; the character of God, working all, and leaving man nothing to do, nor helping him to do any thing; that Christ has done enough to procure pardon for the guiltiest; the justifying truth, that Christ has fulfilled all righteousness: The gift of righteousness, &c. but especially the one thing needful;” which we find chimed over and over from the title-page to the end of his performance, as if every body was bound at once to understand and submit to *Palæmon*’s sense of them. It is very hard to deal with a man who keeps thus in general terms, which may be and commonly are understood very differently: such a one especially as our author, who never fails to keep some back-door open; and has impudence enough to insult you most unmercifully for injuring him, by mistaking his meaning; and you must be very thankful, if you are not posted

up as a sworn enemy to the ancient Gospel and Apostolic truth.

That Jesus is the Christ, was the great point in dispute in the days of the Apostles, when his character seemed to be generally allowed. The case is now inverted; the fact is allowed, and the character disputed. But it was the Gospel or *good news*, proclaimed first by the Angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and afterwards committed to the Apostles, to be published throughout the world. The Gospel was no new religion, nor any new Revelation the world had not before; but the fulfilment of a promise, which all the hopes of mankind were founded on from the beginning of the world. This was good news indeed, to all who understood the import of that promise. In his resurrection from the dead and the glory that followed, he was declared the Son of God with power; and his being indeed the Christ, the Messiah, or promised Seed, was established beyond all contradiction. Of this decisive fact, the Apostles were the chosen witnesses; and were strongly supported by the Holy Spirit who was sent by their Master, according to his promise when he left them. And however there was, in this fulfilment of the promise, a far clearer exhibition of the divine Character, and particularly of his Faithfulness; yet *Palæmon* talks either very ignorantly, or very thoughtlessly, when he supposes any other views of God, or any of his perfections discovered then, which were not revealed from the beginning. Mankind had lived under the first revelation of that divine constitution ever since our first father was driven out of paradise. But, until that divine constitution, and the true character of the Messiah, which stands closely connected with it, is rightly understood, nothing can be made of the words. Nor can there be any but one way of coming to the knowledge of it, namely, by the record God has made concerning his Son, and the testimony which he has given there. But it is not from any one or more parts of the Record separately, but from

from the whole taken together, that we are to form our conceptions of him. And whosoever believes it not in every point, the Apostle John assures us, stands guilty of that horrible blasphemy which no man dare express in words; and as effectually makes God a liar, as if he had called him so in plain terms.

By the account the Apostle there gives of that Record and testimony which must be believed under this dreadful issue, a small portion of *Palæmon's* spirit would bring him in very deeply guilty. The Apostle tells us expressly, That the Record, which whosoever does not believe makes God a liar, is this; *that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: whence it necessarily follows, that he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life* *.

This we are assured of, which the whole of the Record bears at full length, that there is an inseparable connection established between this life and Jesus Christ; that the one cannot be given without the other. To him the promise or grant of life †, with all that belongs to it, was made; on him was laid the performance of the terms of the grant: He performed them so perfectly in his obedience unto the death, that he could say to the Father himself, He had finished the work he had given him to do; and insist for that glory which belonged to him on that account: His claim was sustained; he was raised from the dead, put in the perfect possession of the fulness of life, with all the powers belonging to it; all power in heaven and in earth. For *as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickneth whom he will, so also doth the Son; for it is given to him to have life in himself, even as the Father hath ‡*: and that is what no creatures can have, unless they could become independent and self-sufficient. And now we have him set forth unto our faith, given

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* 1 John v. 10. 11. 12.

† Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 350, 351.

‡ John v. 21.—26.

as the highest evidence and strongest pledge of God's love to the world, that we might live by him; and that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And if the precise terms of the Record are duly considered, it will be found, that, what our Translators render sometimes *covenant*, and sometimes *testament*, is really what we call a grant, a disposition, or deed of conveyance; for *διαθήκη* a *testament*, must be acknowledged a very different thing from *συμβολή* a *covenant* or mutual agreement. The substance of the whole our Lord gives us in words which, literally rendered, are; *As the Father hath disposed to me, so do I dispose the kingdom to you* *.

But *Palæmon* says boldly †, that such a Grant or deed of gift of Christ and his benefits, is a meer fiction of the Popular Preachers, and one of these engines by which they draw off peoples attention from the *one thing needful*, the *salutary truth*; "because it turns out to be a gift of benefits to multitudes, who are never benefited thereby:" and, for nearly the same reason, he concludes, "That their urging upon their hearers to believe, that Christ is as willing as he is able to save all that come unto God by him," is another notable artifice of theirs; because, says he, in that case, they certainly should be saved.

It would be sufficient to say, what every body knows, that no benefit can be had by a deed of gift in any case, if the gift is either refused or neglected; and that is the only case in which those who hear the Gospel can miss of being benefited.

Palæmon tells us, that "the Gospel presents us a faithfull testimony to be believed, exhibiting an amiable object to be loved, and good things to come to be hoped for." If one should ask, how these amiable and future things are exhibited in the testimony? he must either greatly belye the testimony, or allow that many who have these exhibited to them

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* Luke xxii. 29.

† P. 350.

them receive no benefit by them. If they do not believe that there are such things; if they do not believe them to be so good as to engage their attention, or even that God will give them,—they will be neglected; and in one or all of these three, God will be made a liar.

No, says *Palamon*, “The promises of the Gospel are made only to believers; and these destroyers of mankind, the Popular Preachers, apply them promiscuously to all who hear the Gospel; and thereby delude them into a long and wearisome labour, a harder task than the perfect observance of the whole law---To believe what is not true, and which themselves acknowledge is not true until it is believed, but by some mysterious means becomes true whenever it is believed.” On this occasion, he throws about a great quantity of coarse irony. When men’s wit is up, the levity of their spirit hurries them sometimes into expressions they would hardly have allowed, had not their fancy got the upper-hand of their judgment.

Nothing is more true, than that there are no promises made to any but believers, for this plain reason, That until they are believed, they go for nothing, and have no more effect, than if no such words had ever been spoken. But the gift of the righteousness held forth in the gospel, on the credit of the divine veracity, is a proper foundation for building faith on. I express the “gift of eternal life” in *Palamon’s* words. For what is this righteousness? He will say, the righteousness of Christ imputed to sinners who have none of their own. And what is the effect of this imputation, which is indeed fairly enough implied in the gift of it? Why, they become righteous; and that shews they have a right. And what have they a right to? The answer must be, To the inheritance our Lord has received, to be disposed and conveyed to all who believe in him.

Here the mystery, he ridicules so saucily, comes out to be no mystery at all. His Gift of Righteousness appears

appears the very same with their Deed of Gift or Grant of Christ and his Benefits. Though the gift stands sure, it is not true that God hath actually given either righteousness or eternal life, until the Grant is believed. There is no alteration in the grant, it stands the same to all ages; but has its effect only by being believed.

If it shall be said, how can any one be bound to believe what is not true antecedently to believing, and what in many, perhaps most who hear it, will never be true? All the difficulty, if there is any, arises from the ambiguity of the word *giving*, and from confounding the grant with the actual conveyance or possession of the gift; which may be easily removed by any one, who will be at pains to consider the state of the grant as it stands in the Record. He will find it invariably true, that God will most certainly give eternal life in the way he has promised it; that is, in Jesus Christ, and through faith or believing in his name: And we are fairly told by the granter, That they who will not believe him shall never have it*.

The name of Christ is that character which arises from the record God has made concerning him. Nor is it any single part or parts taken separately, but the whole taken together. His cross is the most advantageous standing, for taking a fair view of his achievements: There, when one looks to what is past,--the glory he had with the Father before the world was,

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* This cannot be in the least degree unintelligible to *Palamon*, seeing it is neither more nor less than what he says of the promises and encouragement proposed by God, Ezek. xviii.—to encourage and engage sinners to work out their own salvation by the deeds of the law. He says, God promises not only to forgive them imputed sin, but even their own past sins, for their encouragement; yet, I presume, he apprehends, that that promise of God goes for nothing, as if it had never been spoken, if the offer is neglected by sinners.

his astonishing condescension in taking upon him the form of a servant, his adorable love to mankind, his putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself; all this presents us indeed with the gift of righteousness: But if we stop there, we have scarcely the half of his character; we must look forward to his resurrection, and the glory that followed.

And, to believe in his name, it will not be enough to believe the atonement, or that he has done all that is necessary for acceptance and justification; but also, that he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sin; to give eternal life, as well as a right to it; and, to say all in one word, that he most assuredly will save all that come unto God by him.

If all this will not satisfy, and it is still insisted on, that no one can be called to believe any thing but what holds true, whether it is believed or not; I only ask, whether the Israelites, whom Moses brought out of Egypt, were bound to believe that God would put them in possession of the Land of Canaan? And yet they could not enter in, because of their unbelief; and for their unbelief in this very point, their carcases fell in the wilderness: A case which we find very warmly pressed by the Apostle, as a warning to such as he says had *the promise of entering into Gods rest* left to them, which he makes the same with having the gospel preached to them, namely, *to take heed that they fall not, as numbers have fallen, after the same example of unbelief* *.

But *Palæmon* insists with very great vehemency, that there is not in the whole divine Record any such thing as calls, commands, invitations, promises or encouragements directed to any unbelieving sinner,---either to believe, or any thing else,---but to keep the commandments; and he falls very foul upon *ASPASIO* for giving *THERON*, even when it appears he had not only perceived but was much pleased with the gift of righteousness,

* Heb. iv. 1. — 11.

righteousness, any other direction or encouragement but * "Be perfect, keep the commandments, and you shall live"; for the merciful truth comes as much "unsought for and unexpected, as Christ came from heaven;" with much more to the same purpose. We shall have occasion to meet with his strange doctrine about the law afterward.

But how any one who has read the Bible, and professes such deference to that divine Record, should stumble into an assertion that not only throws the whole into a mist, but makes at least one half of it, I might say the whole, absolutely unintelligible, or something greatly worse which I do not chuse to give a name to, --- is hard to be conceived.

It would be no better than trifling, to attempt a proof of what stands evident in every part of the Record; and the great design and intention of the whole. How can the great salvation be neglected by those to whom it was never sent? How can they who never had the record or testimony directed to them, be said to make God a liar? And how can they be thought worthy of such sore punishment, for not believing what is not true? and what they are neither called nor commanded to believe? Or is it not true, that God hath given his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have everlasting life? That he is lifted up, as the Brazen Serpent was in the Wilderness, that all the ends of the earth may look unto him and be saved? That he is so set forth a propitiation (a propitiatory, or mercy-seat, the same as a throne of grace) through faith in his blood, which all who will, may approach with boldness, in the virtue of the great sacrifice and powerful intercession of the great High Priest? That he has commanded his Gospel to be preached to every creature; and whosoever shall believe shall be saved, and he that believeth

* Palæmon's Letters, *passim*.

lieth not shall be damned? That he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, and commands all men every where to repent?

And what shall we say of Wisdom's calls in the book of Proverbs *; the Prophet's call to every one that thirsts to come unto the waters, to buy wine and milk, without money and without price; with many others of the same kind? What shall we say of our Lord's very earnest calls, with the encouragements annexed to them,—"Come unto me all ye that labour" and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me"; and when he stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink, &c.?" Were all those believers unto whom these calls are directed? Or shall we say, they are all clogged with restricting qualifications? That nothing was left but empty insignificant sounds? Were all believers to whom the Apostles preached? Or what could they mean when they told the Jews promiscuously, that to them was the word of this salvation sent; that the promise was to them and to their children; and directed them to repent and believe the Gospel, to repent and be converted, to save themselves from that untoward generation? When our Lord exhorts his hearers to labour for the meat which endures unto everlasting life, which he the Son of man would give them; when the primitive preachers directed those, who wanted to know what they should do to be saved, to believe on the Son of God; when the Apostle John tells us, that "This is his commandment, that they should believe on him whom he had sent:" shall we say, these calls are directed only to believers, or that they import

* Prov. i. 20.—33. ix. 1.—6. These are striking passages, worth the attention of all who would see the gross misrepresentation given of the Scripture-calls by *Palamon*. Can these be interpreted calls to sinners to seek salvation by the deeds of the law?

import no more than, as *Palæmon* asserts, "Be perfect, and keep the commandments of the law?" When we hear such encouragements as, *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out; whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely;* and our Lord's pathetic complaint, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life;* (though *Palæmon* has pronounced the emphasis put upon *will* as a very impertinent one), we must conclude, that the Gospel, in its full extent, comes to all that hear it; and that none such shall ever have any colour left them to say, "The word of salvation did not come to me, neither were the calls or promises directed to me;" but the blame shall certainly land, where our Lord has put it; *You would not come unto me, that ye may have life.*

The perfect atonement made by the great High-Priest, the blessed Son of God,—his perfect fulfilment of the terms of eternal life, in virtue of which the Grant comes perfectly free and unlimited by any thing but the absolute Sovereignty of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardens whom he will; this is so much not only the sole ground of the sinner's acceptance with, and access to God, but the great foundation of all the blessings and privileges contained in the constitution and grant of grace, that it is hardly possible to carry one's zeal too high against every thing whatsoever, which is pretended either to rival or share in the honour and effect of that most perfect righteousness. But there have always been a sort of men in the world, who, through their great eagerness against one extreme, have blindly run upon another often as dangerous. I hope it is not yet forgotten what mad work was made in the last age, under pretended or mistaken zeal for the honour of the atonement and free sovereign grace: and it gives real concern to find *Palæmon* treading so nearly in their steps, and with the same licentious and insolently abusive spirit.

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It is too much that he has, in the vehemence of his opposition, jostled out the most substantial part of the constitution of grace, without which the atonement could neither be understood, nor answer the purpose it was designed for, I mean, the promise and grant of eternal life annexed to it; and at the same time thrown out more than one half of our blessed Redeemer's character, in order to reduce all to what he calls *the one thing needful*. But, had he stopped there, something might have been said for him, and some colourable pretext found for bringing in both in another view.

But he has not thought fit to stop there; but erected a new system of practical divinity upon this imperfect, and consequently false view of the Gospel of Christ. His fundamental position, "That Christ has done all and left us nothing to do," if he had added, "in order to our justification and acceptance with God," would have been cheerfully agreed to by all who rest their faith singly on the divine Record. But by some strange turn, I do not say whether in his head or his heart; he, under this pretext, runs down, with the utmost fury of vehemence, not only every duty, but every movement or exercise of the mind that has any relation to religion, or to one's spiritual and eternal concerns.

I thought once to have copied out his rhapsodies at length, that the Reader might see with his own eyes: But as I find it would swell this paper much beyond my intention, I must content myself with giving the import of them; and refer to his Epistles for full satisfaction.

I had occasion before to observe, That there is a line of truth and another of duty running through the whole system of grace, which *Palæmon* mistakes for truth and falsehood twisted together. Every truth, so far as it is perceived and believed, makes a suitable impression upon the heart; forms the sentiments,

ments, and regulates and determines the affections, and thereby the whole conduct of the believer. The facts on which the system is founded stand so strongly attested, and the whole so perfectly adjusted to the constitution and circumstances of mankind,---that it must approve itself so to the understandings and consciences of all who are by any means brought to the knowledge of it, as shall produce, what may be very justly called, a *rational faith*. By a rational faith, the highest a meer child of Adam can carry it, I mean no more but a persuasion that the things are so; that they ought to be relied on,---and so believed, as to make such impressions on the heart, as shall produce a conversation such as becomes the Gospel of Christ †. At the same time, the man who is not conscious he has ever felt the demonstration of the Spirit, and that divine

† Tho' we are authoris'd to suppose, that there may be a faith which is the exertion of rational persuasion only (as is the faith of Devils), and tho' every person ought to be very jealous lest his own be only such; yet none has a right to impute that character to the faith of others, where there is not a legible contempt of that purity of heart which the faith of the gospel produces. In this light, *Palamon* is guilty of gross imposition upon his undiscerning Readers, by abusing the means and labour used by the serious to believe, and their seeking faith from the author of it, as self-righteous labour; seeing none but the Searcher of hearts (whose council he boldly thereby invades) knows whether such persons are real believers or not. Nothing but the greatest presumption will embolden any man to determine another has not faith, merely because he is very much exercised in crying for it as what he wants; seeking it as silver, and searching for it as for hid treasures. We are informed, that an anxious prayer to the Lord to help his unbelief---was the heart-exercise of one who believed. Our Lord often found, in the case of his own disciples, that where there was faith there was also unbelief. But *Palamon* informs us, that where there is an affecting sense of unbelief, and endeavours to overcome it, there is not faith, but an effort to set up a righteousness in opposition to that they think they are seeking after.

divine power, on which only the Apostle assures us the right Christian faith can stand,---must fear, and in a great measure feel, that his belief has not effects suitable to the influence of divine power; and when he has exerted all his powers to the utmost, his attempts he will find so ineffectual, that he must conclude a necessity of a divine interposal; the interposal of that power which makes a new heart and a new spirit. What shall one do in this case? Eternal salvation or damnation are of too great moment, and too interesting, to be overlooked or neglected. And he is a brute indeed, or rather something below the most stupid of them, who is not affected with the utmost solicitude and concern: And in that case, who can help exerting his utmost efforts, or employing all the powers he has,---and where they fail, (as, if he is in earnest, he will find them failing him on every turn), crying with the greatest earnestness for help and relief from the only hand which can give it; and using all the means of obtaining light and direction in the important question, What he shall do to be saved?

Palamon says, No*: For if ever you attempt to believe in Christ for light or life, for his Spirit and Grace,---or presume to cry to God for help and assistance in any spiritual wants or weaknesses, or show any solicitude or concern about eternal salvation, or the way that leads to it; you are in the high road to hell, in rebellion against your Maker, and denying the God that is above. Why? "The saving truth
"comes unlooked and unfought for; and he has
"assured us, *he is found of them that sought him not;*
"and therefore, they that seek him can have no
"chance. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him*
"that runneth; and therefore, none who is very
"willing

* See Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 86. 117. 296. 299. 423. and *passim* 41. 45. 88.

"willing and very earnest has any thing to expect." The voice is heard behind; and therefore can be heard by none but such, as are running away, or at least have their backs to God. The Jews, who sought after righteousness, came short of it, because they sought it as it were by the works of the law; and therefore, it is very evident, "That those who follow or seek after the righteousness of God which is by faith—must certainly come short of it." And he might have added, what is as strong to the purpose; "That Esau sought the blessing carefully, and with tears."

Can this be the man who twits his opponents so smartly, with punning on Scripture-texts?

But whatever may be set aside, either as pernicious or useless, Faith must be allowed so absolutely necessary, that one can do nothing and expect nothing without it: And the Spirit of God has seen fit to describe it, (no doubt, for answering wise purposes), by turns and expressions which naturally imply some activity on the believers part: And, in fact, however true it is that the evidence of truth, wherever it appears in its full strength, does not leave one at liberty to believe or not; yet much may be done either to clear up or obscure, and even stifle the evidence.

Palæmon would make us believe, that these are so many snares laid to draw off our attention from the simple truth, and the bare belief of it, to some self-justifying labour; and erecting distinctions and qualifications, to recommend us to the Divine favour. There is hardly one of them he has not made it his business to burlesque*. Those most commonly made use of, *looking to Jesus, coming to him, receiving him, flying to him for refuge*,—will be allowed very significant and proper, by all who know any thing of the constitution of Grace.

But

* See particularly Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 36. 282. 328. 363. 370. 373.

But our Letter-writer, in his great wisdom, tells us,--that they who make use of them "seem to forget that "he is in heaven, and we upon the earth:" And makes himself very merry with the image of faith drawn on this plan; having eyes to look to Christ, hands to receive him, feet to come to him, and wings to fly to him for refuge; and is silly enough to expect his Readers will be diverted as much as he.

Those other terms, which are taken from the actings of the mind, such as *trusting, reliance, dependence, &c.* he acknowledges are proper enough; but they are not faith, but only the effects and consequences of it. But if these effects are such as faith cannot be without, it is hard to conceive how faith can be justly described without them. It is not, for instance, every kind of assent or believing that constitutes the Scripture faith. Sure that *something* else, whatever it is, which distinguishes it, must belong to its very essence, as without which it cannot be.

But, to go on with *Palæmon's* divinity: If you shew any concern about the hardness of your heart,--the atheism, unbelief and enmity against God, you find lodged there--your shameful attachment to a present world, and sluggish coldness toward spiritual and eternal things; especially, if you find yourself deeply affected with the prevalency of sin in yourselves or others, and earnestly exert yourselves for relief; you are in a dangerous course of murmuring against God, and engaged in open rebellion against his Sovereignty. For our new Apostle assures us, That the old grey-headed sinner, (especially if he is very obdured and hardened, has carefully kept out of the way of what is called the means of grace, indulged himself in the full gratification of every lust, and wrought all uncleanness with greediness),--is by far the most proper object of mercy, because he is the most miserable; and stands infinitely fairer for salvation, than one of these who have spent their whole

whole life in the most earnest and serious study to know the mind and will of God, and to have his heart and life conformed to it. Exercised souls, heart-work, a saving change, are good for nothing but to be laughed at.*!

And whereas these wicked Popular Preachers, and their disciples, tell you a great many long-winded stories of the agency of the Spirit, and sovereign efficacious grace,—for quickning the dead sinner, convincing him of sin, and making him feel the dreadful state he is lying in; healing the natural enmity of the carnal mind against God, and forming the heart into a conformity unto the gospel of Christ; these are all meer fictions of their own, corruptions of the ancient gospel; tending to erect distinctions among men, and foster spiritual pride by the good qualities and endowments they feel in themselves. For there is no grace in the Gospel but the bare atonement, the merciful truth, the bare work of Christ. “God appears there not working deliverance by halves, not co-operating with sinful man, not restoring his depraved faculties, and assisting him less or more to deliver himself; but working compleat deliverance for man, without his concurrence in the least.”

This counterfeit grace, he says, corresponds exactly with their preliminary faith, brought in by the corrupters of the Gospel; by which they lead their followers to look for grace, *i. e.* the exertion of Divine power to convince them of their need of Christ, to reconcile their hearts to him and his way of saving sinners, and enable them to believe in him. And all the purpose it serves for is, to prepare and qualify men, that is, “to make them more deserving ob-
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* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, *passim*, particularly, p. 11. 34. 36. 41. 45. 83. 84. 86. 88. 94. 95. 113. 125. 128. 221. 287. 292. 295. 299. 312. 321. 325. 330. 342. 351. 360. 363. 4. 387. 400. 404. 408. 412. 415. 423. 440. 445. 451. 457.

“ jests than others, and better qualified for being
 “ benefited by the great work of mercy and grace
 “ finished by Christ on the cross; where alone the
 “ saving grace of God is manifested. This prelimi-
 “ nary grace, however it has been christianized, is
 “ at bottom the same thing with that divine *afflatus*,
 “ influence or energy, by which it was supposed phi-
 “ losophers and heroes of old became good and great
 “ men.”

But of all the absurdities these deceivers impose
 upon their followers, that senseless thing they call a
Law-work, leading poor creatures through dark and
 dreary paths before they can get a sight of the saving
 truth, and especially the pains they are directed to
 take for attaining deep convictions of sin,—is the ab-
 surdest. None but sinners have any advantage by,
 or any need of the Gospel. “ For, who will labour
 “ to be convinced, That all his labour is to no pur-
 “ pose unless to his hurt.”——“ Why should I be
 “ at such pains, and dress so fine, and put on so
 “ many ornaments, that I may better remember I am
 “ naked or clad in rags? Must I dress like a Gentle-
 “ man, to be a fitter companion for beggars, &c.”
 And yet one should think it is no unnecessary piece
 of knowledge, nor easily attained, —to know that we
 are really poor and wretched, and miserable and blind
 and naked †.

But

† *Palaeon* seems indifferent into what gross inconsis-
 tencies he involves the Scriptures, if he can only confound
 people out of their reflection into his views. A law-
 work, or conviction of sin by the law, to be desirous of
 such a temper, or of impressions,—is self-righteous work,
 in one who endeavours to believe, or to stretch out the
 withered hand; yet by his commentary on the divine calls
 and solicitations to sinners to repent, return, and look unto
 him to be saved who is God and none else,—he reduces them
 wholly into pathetic exhortations to the obedience of works.
 Surely, if this were true, as he falsely asserts, God must
 be

But our Doctor assures us, That all the pains that can be taken this way, and particularly the great ado that is made about Carelessness and Security, and putting off Repentance to a Death-bed,--is all impertinent and needless. It is *impertinent*, and something worse; for it answers no purpose, until the voice is heard behind one; and it puts him upon working for life, in a direct opposition to the Gospel of Christ, where all is

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be either thereby calling the guilty to what he judges possible for them to attain; or he exhorts them into that course, that sinners may by that means perceive their own guilt more deeply, and the impossibility of salvation but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole of *Palamon's* sophistry to bring what he calls the popular doctrine into reproach, is wound up in this false reasoning: Because it is not having believed, but believing, which constitutes the Christian,---while it is not having believed, but what one does believe, which constitutes the Christian's comfort; therefore all endeavours to believe, and attain these dispositions of mind which are connected with faith, are studied by the serious, and recommended by the Popular Preachers,---for the sake only of comforting them with the knowledge of their having believed, and not with the truth which they do believe. And the whole dispute between him and these people, as he lays it,---seems to turn on this single question, which a sheet of his volumes might have cleared, tho' perhaps agreeable to neither of their views, namely, Whether does the evidence of a person's own christianity, or, in other words, his assurance of hope, lie in a consciousness of these dispositions of mind wrought in him which are said to attend faith,---or in a consciousness of having walked in that course of obedience which is said to be the fruit of faith? Truly, I am afraid, which ever side of the question serious people are encouraged to expect the evidence of their christianity, or the ground of their assurance, either of hope or understanding, in; they will be found so far equally engaged in a course of self-righteousness: As every person must at one glance perceive, that the one places that evidence as

directly

owing to meer sovereign grace, which is never shown to any but such as neither mind nor regard it. It is *needless*: For if any one knows he is a sinner, he must know that he is miserable, and that is conviction. Thus he falls very foul upon ASPASIO for saying to THERON, that his convictions were not deep enough.

Again, if one believes the atonement, that is faith. The man who believes this, is a child of God. And this is all that the Apostles meant by conversion, regeneration, &c. and this he instructs by the example of the Publican, who, he tells us, went away justified, upon saying, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*: Tho' our Lord says only he went away justified *rather* than the boasting Pharisee, but says not whether either of them was really justified.

That one stands as good chance at the very moment of death, and a much better, than they who have been all their life-time labouring on what they call *spiritual exercises*, and that foolish thing called *heart-work*;—he peremptorily determines, by a long descant on the case of the thief on the cross; who is not represented as praying for a new heart, or grace to help him to believe; but purely, by what he had observed about Jesus, he concludes him able to save, and so addresses his prayer of faith.

S E C T.

directly upon a person's own attainments as the other; tho' the courses to arrive at that evidence are not equally short. But I hope it will be found, that tho' both must be walked in as the road, yet neither of them can be the foundation of assured hope; that assurance lying only in the enlarged views the Christian receives of God, his love and faithfulness, and not any views we attain of ourselves: for whenever we turn our eyes on ourselves, our dispositions or labour of love, we turn our eyes off him, where the ground of all our comfort and confidence of hope lies,

S E C T. III.

Palæmon's account of Faith, considered.

IT must be acknowledged, says *Palæmon*, that this is a plain easy way; free, altogether free, of these dark-som dreary ways he complains of in the doctrine of *ASPASIO* and his friends, and cannot fail of quieting so soon as known; it perfectly destroys all distinctions among mankind; and, I was going to say, sets saints and sinners upon a level. But *Palæmon* has entered a caveat against such a conclusion: for he has told us, if any person shall be found in *THERON*'s circumstances, that is, “if we feel an aversion to sin, and prize the blessed *Jésus* above all things, if the prevailing bias of our affections be to the divine Redeemer, and the habitual breathing of our souls after conformity to his image:” (Any common Christian would have thought, as *ASPASIO* did, that the man was a real believer; tho’ he had not got above all doubts and fears, so as to say with confidence, *Christ died for him*, or that the Gift of righteousness and eternal life extended to him: But) our Apostolical Doctor has peremptorily declared, * that one so well disposed has no need of any imputed righteousness; he may do very well, and may assure himself of the divine favour, and all the assistance he needs of his Spirit and grace. But at the same time he is quite out of the reach of the merciful and salutary truth; that can reach none but desperate sinners, and such as have nothing but wickedness to distinguish them from others. This saving truth, he tells us, is of such a ticklish nature, that if once we begin to consider it seriously, and endeavour to have our hearts formed upon it, which he calls working upon it, all is lost; we can have no more any benefit or advantage by it.† But the sturdy

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* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 295. 299.

† P. 45. 295. 312. et seqq.

dy rebel, who can, for forty, fifty, or even a hundred years together, hear of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and heartily despise the riches of grace revealed in Christ Jesus, and all that God can do either for him or against him, needs not be in the least uneasy; for whenever he pleases to advert to the merciful truth, it quiets as soon as known, ---and as easily at the last moment of life, as in the bloom of youth. And there is nothing to hinder him, but his unwillingness; while the near prospect of death, and an awakened conscience of an ill-spent life, (and the more wicked he has been, the stronger his remorse is like to be,) can hardly fail to make him cry as the Publican did, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*. Tho' one should think his hope of being remembered by our Lord in his kingdom, the thief's prayer of faith, should be but very faint*.

And very faint it must be, not only in him, but in all believers, and in all cases whatsoever; if *Palæmon's* account of faith proves the true one. We have already observed, that, according to him †, there is no such thing in the Record as any gift or grant of Jesus Christ,

* One has reason to apprehend, from the temper of *Palæmon*, and his method of treating the adversaries he constitutes to himself,---that he will be willing to catch at the shadow of an opportunity for arraigning the writer here; as an enemy of divine Sovereignty, and the riches of mercy in Christ to the chief of sinners at the last hour of the day. But, as to what is said here, I presume, that every honest unbiassed Reader will be fully sensible, that our controversy with him is not about the unbounded Sovereignty of grace, and the humbling discovery of it to the pride of every man; but about, who they are, according to the light of the Scriptures, (which are constantly calling sinners to mercy), that appear most in the way of salvation, and who not? They who seem to be deeply concerned about it, and are crying, *Lord help my unbelief*; or they who are despising all his counsel, and will have none of his reproof.

† Letters on Theron, &c. p. 45. 295. 312. et seqq.

Christ, or of eternal life in him, nor any the least foundation for any particular application of the promises; no promises, no calls, no commands, no encouragements of any kind given to any but believers, or to any sinner until he believes. The utmost their belief can rise to, extends no further than this, that there is an atonement in Christ; a perfect righteousness, which justice is perfectly satisfied with; that God is well pleased in his Son; that it is consistent with all the divine perfections, and the measures of his government, to pardon and to forgive sin; and that sovereign grace extends as naturally to the greatest and vilest sinner, as the least; and so much more, as these are the most proper objects of mercy. The result of all is,--that indeed Jesus Christ, as he is able to save to the uttermost, can very easily save me; but whether he will or not, I know not, cannot know, but by the event. And that this is the true Christian faith, he attempts to prove, by the case of those who came to our Lord for healing of their diseases. The faith that was required of them, was no more, than to believe that he was able to do that which they wanted; and accordingly the leper's profession of faith was accepted: *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean* *.

Their faith indeed could rise no higher; and if we had no more ground than they had, neither could ours. But had the proclamation been made in their case, assuring all of cure who applied unto him for relief from bodily diseases,--as it stands in the Record we have put into our hands, proclaiming spiritual deliverance; (*Come unto me all that labour; and whosoever will, let him come; and him that cometh, I will in no ways cast out*); I believe that If, in strict justice, (tho' our merciful High Priest has compassion on the weakness of our faith, which is partial unbelief), would have been constructed an affront, an open impeachment of his veracity and faithfulness.

Palæmon

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 351. et seqq.

Palæmon is aware of the difficulty there is, in finding any ground of hope or comfort in this bare possibility; and states it fairly. "Seeing many shall perish, and the Gospel says nothing to me but what it says to every one, what comfort can I find from it, unless I can find about myself, at least one grain of odds casting the balance in my favour, &c." The question is ludicrously put, in spight to the men he is inveighing against; but it has a very serious meaning, and ought not to have been trifled off with two lines of *Prior*; and with drollery upon the *something* that is wanted to relieve a distressed soul. The dreadful reflection, that many in the same situation shall perish, must mar very effectually the peace and quiet, much more the comfort of every man who thinks at all: And when he finds it expressly asserted, that Christ died only for such as are given him of the Father, and that only they are designed the heirs of eternal life; convictions must be very slight, and concern about these matters as slight, if he can be easy so long as he can perceive no more than a bare possibility of relief by the atonement.

Palæmon asks, in his hectoring way; "whether the report of an importation of corn to a famished country will not give joy to the inhabitants in a great famine? and whether it will not give great joy to rebels, to hear that it is consistent with the honour of the Sovereign, and all the laws of the country, to pardon the rebels?" It will: But if it is known, and especially if it is notified at the same time, that the corn and pardon is only designed for some particular persons, while multitudes are left to starve; it will very naturally give a great deal of anxiety: But sure, it can give neither quiet nor comfort, until they have some assurance that they are of that happy number. And how much greater still must their anxiety be, if it holds true,---that none, who show any solicitude or concern about it, shall have any part in it; especially

especially if they are very earnest and assiduous in their applications and addresses for relief.

Palæmon, notwithstanding, insists with great vehemency, That there is no grace in the Gospel but what is manifested in the atonement; that this is all that the sinner needs, and all that Revelation adds to the natural knowledge of God and his law; that it quiets as soon as known, and without any further interposal of Divine grace,---either repairing our disordered faculties, doing any thing in us, or helping us to do any thing; that this one thing needful, this bare truth, proves not only a source of never-failing joy and comfort, but effects every change that is made in the man. Conversion, repentance, regeneration, and the new birth, the new creation, &c. import no more but the knowledge or bare belief of the merciful truth. He is ready to curse all to the pit of hell, who shall presume to doubt of this; or to deny that this bare belief is the sole and abundantly sufficient ground of hope; or to say that there is any working of the mind, or divine assistance necessary to make it effectual.

I need not repeat again what I have, I believe, oftener than once had occasion to observe already, that *ASPASIO*'s friends not only allow, but zealously maintain, that the atonement made by the Redeemer, the great High-priest, carries in it all the grace and favour ever God meant to shew to mankind,--and, as it stands connected with the gift of righteousness or eternal life, is the great foundation on which all their faith and hope rests. But there are two questions on which he and they appear to differ very widely, namely, whether the bare belief of the facts, as they stand in the Record, is that faith in Christ, and in God through him, which justifies and saves a sinner? And, 2dly, whether there is not, more particularly, some assurance of one's personal welcome to the benefit provided for sinners in these facts, necessary to the comfort and establishment of the Christian in a conversation such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, overcoming

coming the world, and supporting against the temptations which are daily casting up?

On the first question, it seems some of them have called the Record as it stands in writing, and unseconded and unsupported by the Divine Spirit and power, a *dead letter*; which *Palæmon* would fain persuade us is a piece of first rate blasphemy *! However, I believe, they will all say what is equivalent; that the words of the Record, whether spoken or written, read or heard, have no manner of effect upon the hearts and spirits of men, until they are set home with the demonstration of the Spirit and power; any further than to produce what I called a *rational faith*, which can do nothing toward quickning one dead in trespasses and sins. It may indeed be the *savour of death unto death*, but can never be the *savour of life unto life*. And in giving or withholding at pleasure these quickning and enlightning influences, as no creature can have any right or claim upon his Creator; the divine sovereignty, in dispensing his grace, appears with great evidence. Whatever faith does or may subsist without this demonstration of the Spirit, for distinction's sake, the popular preachers call *historical*, that is, such credit or assent as we give to facts credibly attested in common history, a sort of faith which, they say, the devils possess in greater perfection than *Palæmon* himself, or any of his friends; as they certainly believe every fact and every circumstance in the Record, both with greater precision and firmness than the best believer among them. He dare not deny it; but attempts to shuffle off the strength of the allegation, by putting the difference upon the devils their hating the truth which they know. Were men in the case of devils, so would they, for the same reason,—namely, That they know this great salvation was never designed for them; and therefore cannot believe with any particular application to themselves, on which all joy and peace in believing rests.

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* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 333. 361. 417.

As to the *second*; ASPASIO had asserted, That no solid comfort could arise from the simple belief of the atonement. And *Palæmon* puts the case too wide, when he says, Mr *Harvey* denies any comfort arising from the simple belief of the gospel. This ASPASIO was so far from doing, that he zealously maintains that the belief of the Gospel, that is, of the gift of eternal life sealed in the blood of Jesus, is the only foundation on which the Christian's comfort and hope can stand. And all the labour that *Palæmon* has bestowed on this head, through the confused course of his declamation, is one continued torrent of slander and defamation. Those who think as he did, do indeed maintain, That a bare belief of that single fact, which he calls the one thing needful, can give no relief, until it is believed with particular application to ourselves; but then, they say, there are other facts, particularly the grant of pardon and life in Christ, inseparably connected with this in the Record; (the want of which connection is what distinguishes the faith of devils from the faith of sinners); and which, taken together as they stand there, cannot be believed at all,—without carrying along with the belief a proportional degree of assurance, not only of the truth of the facts, but of the fulfilment of all the promises in the way which is proper to them. And it appears extremely odd for any one to pretend to believe the promise is made, and to make any doubt of its fulfilment: To believe that God has commanded us to trust him, and to doubt whether he will do or give what he has commanded us to trust him for. When *he has raised his Son from the dead, and given him glory, that our faith and hope may be in God*; need any put the question, For what? when the whole Record answers, Eternal life. And shall we yet make a doubt, whether we may expect it personally, in the belief of the truth.

Palæmon had charged ASPASIO, in the very entry of his Epistles,—that *his faith*, that is, believing for ourselves, (which some, it seems, have called the
appropriating

appropriating-act,) needs a great many subsidiary props. His, indeed, consisting only in a bare belief of the facts, needs none: But it has as great a defect, and we may safely say, a much greater, That it leaves the most assured believer in as great uncertainty, and, to use *Palæmon's* words, as much in the dark as to his comfort, as if Jesus Christ had never appeared; and marks out as insuperable a task for us, as "if he had not finished his work." Whatever task we may be put upon in *ASPASIO's* way; we have that grace which is in Christ, the Spirit and power of God lodged, in him to look to,—grace to help in every time of need; and with this assurance too from our Lord's own mouth, *That his heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* It is true, indeed, none will ask without some degree of faith; but we are well warranted to pray, *Lord help unbelief*, and *increase faith*,—after all that *Palæmon* has said against it.

But miserable are they who are under *Palæmon's* direction: They may neither pray for any thing, nor attempt any thing; nay not so much as study the Record, or take what encouragement they can find therein: They may not hope for any relief against the hardness and perverseness of their hearts, or the blindness of their minds: Nay, they must not show any uneasiness, but sit down contented, until the voice is heard behind them. No; That looks like waiting: The only safe way, and the only way to be easy on this plan, is to run as fast and as far from God as we can; and boldly presume, that *The Lord have mercy on a miserable sinner*, will, in the end, do the business at once.

Palæmon dare not avow this natural consequence of his new divinity; which, it is to be feared, has deluded many into everlasting destruction. He is sufficiently aware, that it is foolish to talk of comfort and joy

joy in believing, without such a measure of assurance as can raise one to boast and glory in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, *in whom they have received the atonement*: He is therefore forced to have recourse to as many subsidiary props at least as ASPASIO; and, if I am able to judge, greatly worse ones.

In the first place, he shifts assurance from faith, and pitches it upon hope. And I believe ASPASIO's friends will be very easy about the exchange, provided hope is kept upon its proper bottom, namely, The pure record and testimony of God; as nothing can be the object of hope, but the things freely given us of God.

Palæmon would have us believe, that he has made a great discovery, by finding, that though faith, hope and love are closely united,--yet faith is not hope or love, nor either of them faith. Tho' in this discovery *Palæmon* distinguishes with greater refinement than the Apostolic writer, Heb. xi. 1. who calls faith the substance (or confidence) of things hoped for. But one may say very positively, that whenever one's *hope* outruns his *faith*, or fixes upon any thing which we are not warranted by the divine testimony to believe, it ceases to be hope, and becomes a vain groundless fancy.

ASPASIO's friends, as appears from his quotations, never pretended, that there is no faith where there is not full assurance: On the contrary, they seem to suppose, that its beginnings are very small, and hardly discernible; but perceived by its effects, in the longings and desires of love. Nor do they refuse that it is much strengthened and supported by the experience of God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. But this I will boldly say,--that so much doubting or staggering as there is, so much is there of unbelief: And as much as is wanting of a full assurance, even to the pitch of rejoicing, boasting and glorying in Christ, so much is wanting of that faith in him, which every one

who hears the gospel, and knows his name, stands bound to honour him with.

These will therefore never agree to *Palæmon's* subsidiary props, on which, with great confidence, he founds the Christian's hope. And where do you think he has fixed it? Why, truly, the man that run down the Popular Preachers, I may say, on this only ground, That they were sworn enemies to the sacred truth as the only ground of hope,—takes it quite off there, and places it on what he calls ministring, or self-deny'd love; the same, I suppose, which the Apostle calls the *labour of love*. In whatever view we take it, it still lands in some good work performed by them: But as believers are taught by their Master to say, even when they have done all, *That they are unprofitable servants*; they will not found any part of their hopes in what they dare not boast of, nor glory in.

But if we look further into the matter, I apprehend, we shall yet find greater abominations, and *Palæmon* landing really in that very thing he had, thro' the whole course of his invective, been very falsely charging upon *ASPASIO* and his friends. May one ask, What is this hope which he thus builds upon his self-deny'd obedience and ministring love? What is it the hope of? The remotest prospect he can take, is that of eternal life; and that is not so remote either; for we are assured every believer has it begun at least in himself. But take it in what light you will, it stands so strongly connected with the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and being made accepted in the Beloved, that they cannot be separated: And it will land in much the same thing, as if he had said openly and honestly, That our hope of acceptance with God, and standing in his grace and favour, is founded entirely on our good works or self-deny'd obedience and ministring love. Yea, he scruples not to say, that the believer's hopes and comfort rise and fall just in proportion

tion to the abounding or abating of his labour and good works. And by his own rule, that must be his *Something*:

“ *The favourite something, which possessest,
“ Spreads light and joy o’er all the rest* *.

“ And so he would have us walk in the light of this
“ *Something*”.

Thus when he comes to give an account of the hope that is in him, it must land us in some other sort of long-winded story than the popular conversions, and greatly worse connected: How he was become a better man, and, by his abundant labour of love, was greatly elevated above all the rest of the world,—as it is either lying in wickedness, or going devoutly to hell along with their deluding Leaders. If we may judge of the tree by his fruit, never man looked down with a more thorough contempt upon all mankind, nor treated them with more self-sufficient insolence and haughty abuse. The ignorant Enthusiasts and Libertines, with all their ribbaldry, are but ponies to him.

But *Palæmon* will readily say, he does not build his hope on any work or labour directly; (for that, he acknowledges, would be a very fallacious bottom, because the best works may proceed from very bad principles); but it is in their connection with the saving truth, as fruits of true faith, and proceeding from the cordial love of the truth; which, he says, is a sort of new instinct; and that all the exhortations, commands and institutions of the gospel, are directed to consciences endowed with this instinct, and are adapted for the service of it. Nothing can be more certain than what he adds, that the truth of the gospel is always the great argument on which every call to working or doing proceeds; and nothing can be more foolish than to attempt working on any other bottom.

E 2

But

* *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, p. 94. 95.

But this salvo will be found to discover the rottenness of his subsidiary props, by which he proposes to support his assurance of hope; I think he calls it *the answer of a good conscience*; and says, that his self-denied obedience proceeds from the sincere love of the truth. But how shall we get at this answer of conscience; or perceive this love of the truth? That lies deep in the heart; and, whatever he may think of it, many deceits are there. Yea, *Polamon* has assured us; that nothing can be made by poring on the heart. And sure he will not build on what he has made so ridiculous.

But he has furnished us with more important exceptions. He has assured us, That all that any man does, or attempts to do, before believing, or rather before the saving truth comes, (for believing must not be any act of ours) -- is plain rebellion against God, and an abomination in his sight. He assures us too, what must be readily allowed, that there is a sort of believing, or something like it, which yet is not true faith; and that the one cannot be distinguished from the other, but by the effects and fruits. But until we are assured that our ministering love proceeds from a true and genuine belief of the truth, there can be no foundation for any hope, much less for the assurance of it. And as, upon his plan, there can be no assurance of the truth of our faith but by a continued perseverance unto the end, all avenues appear quite shut up --- by which we can have access to it.

I know not what advantage *Polamon* may have, by pretending to rank with those the Apostle John speaks of, *who have known the truth, and that no lie is of the truth*; or by that yet more singular talent of *Judas*, -- of seeing and knowing by direct intuition, without any exercise or labour of the mind. But sure, ordinary Christians must be condemned to walk all their days in darkness, without any the least hope of relief

relief; while they stand effectually debarred from that relief which God has provided for them that fear him, to *trust in the name of the Lord*; * for none may attempt that but believers.

Thus poor Christians are put upon the hardest, I may say, the impossible task, to squeeze the assurance of hope out of their own painful labours; a harder task than what he burlesques so unmercifully,--namely attempting, by divine assistance, to bring up the heart to a proper improvement of the word of life; while, at the same time, they are inhibit, under the most dreadful penalty, from doing, or attempting to do any thing, until they are sure they are real believers. The only relief they have left them, is the hope of the saving truth coming at last. And this, as our new teacher has laid it, will stand good to the very moment of death: Tho' I believe, he will not take upon him to secure the consequences†.

E 3

But,

* Isa. l. 10.

† Here it well may be asked, For what end did *Palemon* write? To instruct unbelievers? No. He cannot correct those whom he cannot convert; for they cannot understand the truth till they believe it: And if such seek after salvation and regeneration, by so doing they run as fast from it as they who despise it. If he writes for the information of believers, who, he allows, are called to the exercise of these things which are wicked courses in unbelievers,---such as turning, repenting, crying to help their unbelief, striving to enter in at the strait gate, searching the Scriptures, &c.; if he writes for such, I say, one would have expected, that, in some part of his two volumes, he would have ascertained when a person might with safety presume to be exercised in answering these calls: When one might determine with himself that it was lawful for him, and his duty, to conclude the Scripture was speaking to him in these terms, which it is additional guilt in an unbeliever to attempt to obey. Take the issue of his work in this light, and it plainly appears contrived for strife and debate;

leaving

But, if *Palamon's* doctrine is sound and true, it must be even worse than a matter of no moment, for one to have any assurance of hope, or indeed any hope at all. Every degree of it carries in it some degree of particular application, something like what the Popular preachers call *appropriation*; applying the promises of the gospel to ourselves, and persuading ourselves that Christ died for us; that God is our God and Father in him; and that all the glory and happiness of Heaven, is our inheritance.

ASPASIO

leaving the grand and final point of his controversy in grosser darkness than when he began. Who are called to repent, &c.? Believers. How does a believer know himself to be such, in order to his presuming to obey the call as addressed to him? One may easily see how he was entangled here, and that it was a point to be slipped over: for he must either have coincided with the popular preachers, in giving some marks; or have confounded a liberty to obey the calls, with what he understands by the assurance of hope. And truly every one who knows he believes, hath divine assurance of his being possessed of everlasting life, and also of his property in Christ; as that life is sure only in Christ; *For they who have the Son, have life.*

May we not ask again; is it a person's seeking after or being in what this or that man, *Palamon*, or another, determines to be the only true constitution of a Gospel-church, that can authorise a serious person to engage in obeying the calls given to believers? If any think so, let them read the 4th chap. of the Epistle of James: and then answer, whether adulterers and adulteresses in any church whatsoever, have any better right than adulterers and adulteresses out of churches, to obey those calls. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you; cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double minded: humble yourselves in the sight of God, and he shall lift you up.* These calls will also certainly determine, beyond further controversy, to whom all the calls of the Gospel are made; unless James, to serve a turn, is here constituted the Apostle of the Law, and not of Jesus Christ.

ASPASIO had put the question, with great assurance,
 " Will this alienate your affections from your al-
 " mighty Benefactor: Will this irritate evil con-
 " cupiscence, or send you to carnal gratifications in
 " quest of happiness." He answers, as well he might,
 " Quite the reverse:* when this faith is wrought in
 " your heart, nothing will be so powerful to produce
 " holy love, and willing obedience; to exalt your
 " desires, and enable you to overcome the world." *Palæmon* takes upon him, with his usual magi-
 " sterial sufficiency, to say, " *Quite the reverse:*"†
 And to instruct, by matters of fact, that such con-
 clusions as these (and where-ever the assurance
 of hope rises a degree above doubting, these con-
 clusions are made) tend directly to what our Sa-
 viour says of the Jews, *That they have both seen*
and hated both him and his Father.‡ And what are
 the facts? why, the Jews made a sort of monopoly of
 God; and, from gross mistakes of their law,
 excluded all the world besides, --- unless they would
 unite with them, and seek righteousness, as they did,
 by the observance of the letter of their law, in direct
 opposition both to the spirit and design of it: which
 indeed could not fail to issue as it did. And from
 this he infers that they who, by believing the record
 and testimony of God concerning his Son, set to
 their seal that God is true, and rejoice in the hope
 of the glory of God, --- must, for this very reason,
 land in determined enmity against God and his Son.
 What shall one say of such reasoning? Little wonder
 he should profess himself an enemy to reason; for
 sure never man showed so poor a talent for it.

S E C T.

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 421. et seqq.

† Ib.

‡ Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 89.

SECT. IV.

Palæmon's commentary on Ezek. chap. xviii. and xxxiii examined, and refuted.

I SHALL now proceed to make some remarks on *Palæmon's* very singular talent as a commentator: and, to borrow for once a word or two from *Junius*; A jewel of a commentator he is! But by his commentary on the Eighteenth and Thirty-third Chapters of *Ezekiel*,* he not only outdoes every other man, but even himself in that way.

We have seen how rigorously he has inhibited all mankind from presuming to meddle with the Gospel of Christ in any shape, unless the saving truth surprise them unexpectedly and unlooked for: But he has found them ample employment another way. "Be perfect, keep the commandments, and ye shall live,"-- he has often told us, is the only language ought to be spoken, except in a society of believers, or a church formed upon the Apostolic pattern. This, by itself, might be overlooked; because our Lord sometimes took this way of rebuking the pride of pretenders to perfection; tho' we never find he sent any away without better instruction.

But how was I astonished to find, in the very entrance of his work, (where he was expressly declaring it no less than criminal in man, as he had great reason to say it is highly criminal, and even direct rebellion, to make any attempt to become righteous by one's own doing) the following note: "Notwithstanding, I am far from thinking, that any honest or sincere attempt to please God ever failed of success. Yea, I am ready to show, that all objections and impediments have been, by a particular divine edict for that purpose, removed and dispensed

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 89.

“dispensed with in favour of all who are sincerely well-disposed, whenever they shall be found †.”* And this edict he pretends to find twice repeated in these two chapters, yea very solemnly ratified by the divine oath. That the reader may be the better able to judge for himself, for once I will join our commentator, --- in intreating, that he will carefully read the two chapters, which will save me the trouble of particular quotations †.

He begins with surprising confidence by fastening upon the divine law an imputation, which I think it was never charged with before, either by friends or enemies, viz. That children were made punishable for the sins of their parents: and, in his great wisdom, he has without any shadow of scripture

† Besides the flagrant prostitution of the divine oracles by the gloss on these passages in *Ezekiel*, calculated to warp and falsify the whole tenor of the calls in the Scriptures to sinners, it is well worthy of observation, that this Commentator imposes that very absurdity upon the veracity and sincerity of God in his addresses to sinners, which he charges the popular doctrine with; a species of blundering which this Author is wonderfully subject to, especially, tho’ unfortunately, when his imputations grow loudest against others. He represents the God of truth solemnly swearing by himself, that he will forgive sin without a ransom (a new and unheard of doctrine indeed!); which truth, according to *Palæmon*, cannot possibly become true in fact, because the terms can never be fulfilled. “This truth to which God swears, in order to remove all lets, and encourage the serious to fulfil the terms, will never prove a truth, unless they fulfil them.” Is not this a copy of that very absurdity which he triumphs in over the popular doctrine? It encourages and calls sinners, says he, to believe a truth, which is not true until it is believed.

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 10. at the foot.

† P. 90.

scripture-authority, established it into a sort of type, by which "God had hitherto kept up in Israel" a standing pledge and memorial of his great "purpose of saving men, by the transferring of "guilt." Had it really been so, it would be very hard to account for the removal of it in *Ezekiel's* time; when it would seem to have been as much needed as ever. But when we find an express law, That *the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin*; and established as the measure and rule of justice by the authority of their wise and righteous Lawgiver; it is very hard to believe, that he established a contrary measure in his dealings with them; or that he gave one rule for men to judge by in his name, and had another for himself to act by. This might have given them some very plausible occasion for saying 'The ways of the Lord were not equal.' He declared, indeed, That he was a *jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation*; but that is of such children as *bate him*;^{*} which is quite agreeable both

* Tho' that clause in the Second command,—*visiting the iniquities of the fathers*, &c. seems especially to regard that dispensation the Israelites were brought under when they received the law; yet the words, taken in their utmost latitude, will bear no such meaning as *Palemon* would gloss them into: For, in the first place, *visiting iniquity*, tho' it implies punishing iniquity; yet it previously imports looking, searching for, and finding the iniquities of the fathers among their children, or upon them; while, by a strange perversion, that Author would impose upon his readers,—in asserting, that it is to be taken for imputing the iniquity of guilty fathers to their children, tho' actually innocent of the same iniquity. But we find, that punishing children for the crimes of their fathers,—is not so much as suggested in the command. It amounts to no more than searching for and finding the same apostasy, and particularly

both to the measures of justice, and to the whole tenure of that grant or covenant as (we call it,) by which they held their inheritance in the land of Canaan. There was something so peculiar in that covenant,

particularly idolatry, continued among the children, which the fathers introduced; and punishing it in the children's days. And the words—*children hating me*—fixes this to be the sense of God in that law, in so far as the *visiting iniquity* is specified to regard children that hate God; which clearly implies their walking in the apostasy and idolatry introduced by their fathers. The striking lesson, therefore, intimated in this threatening is, That God wisely and kindly ordained, that as, according to the term of natural life fixed among men, parents might live to see the influence of their bad instruction and example upon their posterity to the third and fourth generation; so, where that was the case, the parents might also see a jealous God searching for their crimes among their children, and punishing them there: and children at the same time might learn, from that administration, that, if they followed the footsteps of such parents; ---the instruction or example of parents, which they might plead, did not acquit them, or throw their guilt back upon the bad examples by which they walked.

It is proper here to point out other two gross contradictions, which *Palamon's* gloss upon these words of the Second command is loaded with. The first is, when he tells us, that the terms wherein children are threatened in the Second command are repealed, altered, or what he pleases to call it, by the edict in *Ezekiel*; assuring the men of his generation, that they should have their own terms, as they grumbled at God's terms given in the law of the Second command. Let it only be asked, what the Lord Jesus Christ meant, when he said, *Not one iota of the law should pass away, until all was fulfilled?*

Again we are taught by *Palamon*, and his particular friend, that the Law admits of or ordains no substitution for sin; but that, according to the letter of the law, every man must live by his own obedience only. This is a direct contradiction of the whole tenor of the law, which is a complete

venant, and in the very intention or design of separating that people from the rest of the world; that it would be perversely wrong to apply their terms, or what was spoken to them, to any other people; or even

plete system of actual substitution in things pertaining to and for the purifying of the flesh; and pointing at that substitution for the purifying of the conscience, which could never have been established, unless the law had admitted of being fulfilled by a substitute; nay, unless the law had been ordained for that very end and manner of being fulfilled; for one could never be a sufferer as a substitute, who knew no sin himself, by that law which admitted of no substitution. But it is no wonder *Palaeon's* attention did not extend so far as this; when he did not advert, that such a doctrine flatly contradicted what he and his friend have laboured to establish, as implied in the words of the second command itself, and that in two different expressions. *Palaeon* urges strongly the transferring of guilt and punishment, from parents to children, in this command; and even finds in it a type (undiscovered till now) of the great Substitute. And in Notes on scripture-texts, by J. Glass, N. vii. p. 3. these words — *who will by no means acquit the guilty*, — are found, by a Hebrew criticism, (that would have been highly culpable and dangerous in a Hutchinsonian), to be an expression of that command intimating how sin is forgiven and yet punished. Yet this unparalleled author tells us, “by the law of Moses no man could obtain life but by his own obedience.” False; for it appointed expiations, not of ceremonial pollutions only, but of moral transgressions. And in the next sentence, “By the gracious sovereign edict of him whom it becomes to act above and beyond all law”, (False again, as it is here applied; for he acted according to the law of Moses, which, though it could not provide the substitute, yet admitted of a substitute; otherwise his next words could not be true): “commandment is given to the Son of the Highest to fulfil the law given by Moses for transgressors”. — Why, the law never was, nor never will be fulfilled; if its express terms insist on personal obedience from sinners, in opposition to the obedience of a substitute for them.

even to them, in any other circumstances than those in which they then were. The oracles of God were committed to them; and they were his witnesses to the world. When they neglected the trust committed to them, they incurred the threatened punishments; which we find were to be carried on from one generation to another, and issued, on their continued perverseness, in a total captivity, and at last in an entire forefalthure. The sins of Manasseh's reign were visited upon that people to the end of the seventy years captivity, in an exact conformity to this rule. But if we take the evidence of Ezekiel in this case, the Israelites were then walking in all the idolatry and wickedness of Manasseh.

The Prophet himself seems to lead us very directly to this construction, in the account he gives of the rise of the proverb which gave occasion to that discourse of his: *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.* It was used, he says, concerning the land of Israel: And it is very evident, it was so; for it was used by those who were carried into captivity out of that land, or groaning under the oppression of a conqueror. There was a promise at the same time of relief and deliverance, whenever they repented and returned to their duty. And many a time they had been delivered, in a most exact conformity unto the terms of their law. The history of that people is one continued demonstration of a particular divine providence, directing and conducting all the affairs of the world. But that unhappy people, instead of pursuing the proper measures for their relief, repenting and returning to their duty; indulged themselves in murmuring against the measures God had taken with them, as if they had not been directed by what they reckoned the proper measures of justice and equity. And in this view, the Prophet's whole discourse appears extremely proper, a perfect vindication of the divine procedure; and

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the whole of what is here asserted and sealed by the oath their great Sovereign, is precisely the same with the whole tenor of his law. But, in this view, life and death could extend no further than that covenant did ; and were both confined to their interest in the promised land.

But as *Palæmon* has seen fit to extend them further, to that life which is promised and the death threatened in the administration of the constitution of grace, that is, The joys and sufferings of the world to come ; there is nothing in the Prophet's discourse, the oath of God, or the calls annexed to it, but what is very agreeable to that gift and grant of eternal life sealed in the blood of the Redeemer, and exhibited in the Record which God has made concerning his Son : provided always, that we consider it as it stands in the record, --- and do not suffer ourselves to be embarrassed by the numberless precarious hypotheses, which have been invented for answering such views as could not be supported by the single testimony of God. I do not say what *Palæmon's* views are : But of all the inventions ever I knew palmed upon the scriptures of truth, his stand in the most glaring opposition to the uniform tenor and design of the whole.

He tells us, in his entrance upon his comment, That, in God's reasonings with Israel by the Prophet, " We will find due consideration paid to the " most notable objections that ever were framed by " the heart of man, against the revealed method of " acceptance with God." These he gives us under two heads. " 1. They thought it unreasonable that " a son should suffer for the sins of his parents, how- " ever well he himself should behave.---This com- " plaint corresponds exactly with that which we " make, against suffering for the sin of Adam. To " obviate this,---He assures them, he would set a- " side that extraordinary providence under which they " had been hitherto conducted,---and deal with them " according to what they counted equity ; viz. That every

“ every one should be answerable only for his own
 “ sins. 2. They also thought it very hard, that if a
 “ man had once led a bad life, no encouragement
 “ should be given for his reformation, however well
 “ disposed he should be for the time to come.” This
 last is a supplement of his own, which there is no
 ground for in the text, nor indeed in the whole divine
 record. He goes on, “ God also removes the ground
 “ of this complaint. He assures every man, who
 “ shall sincerely repent, or turn from his evil way,
 “ and do that which is lawful and right, that he shall
 “ be happy, and no mention made of his former faults.”
 “ ——— The field then is left fair for every one who
 “ will to run.” ——— “ God himself hath set his oath
 “ to it, That every one who turns from evil to do
 “ good, shall be happy, and may expect all counte-
 “ nance and encouragement from his Maker ; if they
 “ do well, no doubt, they shall be accepted, &c.”

Here we have two pieces of new divinity ; such as it
 is hard to imagine, how any person who has ever read
 the Bible could have stumbled on. But whenever one
 turns aside from the truth in one point, one darling error
 will draw a multitude after it ; and, as himself often
 says, will overturn the whole system of Revelation.

That mankind are admitted to their own terms,
 and security given them that the sins of their pro-
 genitors shall not be imputed to them, is a propo-
 sition, if it is designed to mean any thing at all, that
 reaches very far. It answers no purpose at all, to
 be told, that the sins of our fathers, grandfathers,
 or great-grandfathers, shall not be imputed ; as it
 never entered anybody's head to imagine they would,
 since the Jewish covenant was set aside. The ex-
 ception, as himself states it, runs higher : It runs
 up to our first father, *that* one man, by whom sin
 entered into the world, and death by sin ; *that*
 one transgression, upon which sentence was given,
 and thereby the state of mankind unalterably fixed and
 determined -- so far as it is appointed, a fixed ordinance

of Heaven, That all men shall die. Shall we believe that this ordinance is reversed, by our new Doctor's imaginary edict? But if it is not, the field can never be open for any one who will to run; unless, by his willing and running, he could either keep himself from dying, or raise himself from the dead. And supposing there had been such an extraordinary provision in their Law, as he says there was, the removal of that could have given no manner of relief; for still it would have continued to be, as the Apostle says it ever was, --- *not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.* But it would be ridiculous to spend paper in remarking on such a palpable absurdity.

His second is the very same that all our philosophers, and those who usurp the honourable name of Freethinkers have been labouring, with all the industry they were masters of, viz. That repentance and amendment give as good security for pardon, and all the happiness of the world to come, as perfect innocence, and even compleat obedience; which, by the by, is only another expression of the same thing. And, in this last, they are nearer the truth than they themselves seem to know; For the most perfect obedience, which is but perfect innocence, could only secure one in the possession of the life which he had, (Gal. iii. 12. *The man that doth them shall live in them*; which is a security against death, not any promise of a resurrection in case of having once become liable to death): but can never lay any thing like a proper foundation for the faintest hope of another infinitely better; as that cannot come but by a free sovereign grant of grace, made by the supreme Proprietor of life. But *Palæmon* is certainly the first professor of Christianity, who ever pretended to father such a spurious brat of an opinion on the word and oath of God; which overturns, at one bold stroke, the whole Gospel of Christ, -- sets aside the necessity of any atonement,

ment, and reverses the whole frame of the constitution of grace, which stands, every part of it, on this great foundation. If our Commentator's doctrine holds true, God can, yea has said and sworn that he certainly will pardon, and give life, everlasting life, to every man who will repent and amend his ways, or even sincerely desire to amend: For we might have "known, that he was essentially kind to the righteous, "and averse to the wicked, though he had never "told us so." If he can consistently forgive sin without an atonement in one case, Why not in all? That bitter cup our Lord was so moved at the approach of, might have *passed from him*; there might have been remission without shedding any blood; and God gave his only begotten Son unto the death, for what might have been as well done without him.

But it would be trifling to spend words in so plain a case; especially when *Palæmon* himself has said, That from the time man was thrown out of paradise, and the sentence of death pronounced upon the whole kind, it is no less than the most daring rebellion to attempt to live any other way than by the promised Seed; the only way God has allowed and appointed any of mankind to live by; to attempt it otherways, after such an establishment, is no less than attempting to live whether our Creator will or not.

All true, *Palæmon* will readily say; but there is no harm done; not the least impeachment of any of these truths: For the case will never happen. No man will ever repent and reform his ways, until the merciful truth overtakes him; and the condescending edict, giving men their own terms, renders them absolutely inexcusable, and lays them quite open to the righteous judgment of God †. *Palæmon* may trifle

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† But tho' it may render sinners inexcusable, it does not render the constitution of grace, and God's declaration therein, consistent and true; as above noticed. Without shedding

how he pleases in his own affairs, and amuse those he has to do with by the most alluring promises and prospects; while he secures himself against the performance, by inserting such terms as he knows will never be performed. And when the deception is found out, he must be contented to bear the character of an idle trifler, or a deceitful truckler. But it is by far too presumptuous boldness to impute such conduct to the God of truth, and to transform his faithful Record into such a deceitful amusement of his poor perishing creatures. In vain does he alledge, that the great end of the law is to fasten upon the sinner a conviction of the impossibility there is of fulfilling it. For besides that he has told us over and over, that we need no such deep convictions, and laughs at the impressions the law makes upon the conscience as a very idle process: It is infinitely below the majesty of perfect Wisdom, to condescend to such mean shifts for attaining his purposes. By this pretended edict, then, there is a real injury laid for multitudes of well-meaning people.

It is not worth while to inquire scrupulously, when such an edict took place. It has stood, it seems, as it now does in the Record, these two thousand years at least. We need not fear any harm from Adam's sin; and our apostolical doctor has assured us, "That there is no impotency in man to do good but what arises from his aversion to it, or any readiness in him to do evil but what arises from his love to it;" which, he says, appears to him both by Scripture and experience: and therefore the Gospel can never be acceptable to the well-inclined, but to such as are ungodly and without strength; that is, I presume, such as are notoriously

shedding of blood, God has declared, there is no remission of sin; whereas, according to this Author's divinity, God has declared, that not only imputed guilt, but actual past guilt, can be forgiven without shedding of blood; nay, that he verily proposes to do so, wherever one inclines to accept of the terms.

toriously wicked. I do not stand to ask, how these who have no impotency, but want of will to do good, can be said to be without strength? There appears a double snare laid by *Palæmon*'s construction of the prophet: Great encouragement to go on securely in a course of known wickedness; and to those who either do, or hope to repent and amend, to promise themselves peace and salvation, without ever minding the only way which God has established. Why? Whenever a sinner, the most profligate, repents, sooner or later,—he has the promise of life.

But, very likely, *Palæmon* will not reckon upon this but as an advantage. Men may work very much upon the law, and delude themselves with the prospect of living by it: They have this great advantage, that they are diverted from the great damning sin of attempting to apply the Gospel and the gift of eternal life to themselves; which, he says, is the self-justifying labour, which leads men devoutly to hell.

But, says *Palæmon*, How shall we do with the solemn declaration and oath, That God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they should turn and live; and the command added, To cast away all our iniquities, and to make to ourselves a new heart, and a new spirit? Why, truly, if we are wise, we will allow them to stand as God has left them; we will believe that what God has so solemnly said and sworn, may be depended on as a certain truth; and hearken to his voice, and address ourselves with all earnestness to obey his call and order, in that way which he has directed. Will he venture to say God has any pleasure in the death of sinners, or that he is unwilling they should repent and live. Or will he say in this case, as he does in a parallel one, That it is not true that God is willing that the wicked should either repent or live, because eventually they do neither, and his will always secures the event?

event*? He has no doubt often heard, that it is a dangerous thing to speak of God even what is true : But what must it be to give him the lie directly ; or under such a slight or rather deceitful cover, That indeed he is very willing that men should turn from their wickedness and live by their own works, but by no means willing

* I know of no example in any author, who ever pretended to treat the Scriptures as the word of the living God, the word of him who cannot lie,---wherein the most solemn declarations ever God made, and the most solemn engagement ever he entered into, are prostituted so audaciously, as they are by this Author upon this occasion. The divine anxiety for the apostasy and backsliding state of sinners, the most fervent and affectionate divine calls to cause them return, and the most solemn oaths that can proceed out of his mouth *That he has no pleasure in their death*,---this author tells us, are all uttered by God to invite and sollicit sinners into a way of salvation by which God never willed that one soul should be saved ; and if we receive *Palemon's* testimony of the matter, it is no less than making God a liar, to apply these to that way of salvation which all the ends of the earth are called to look unto him for, who is God and none else ; and which declares, " Whosoever comes unto him he will in no ways cast out." " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you,---but ye would not." I should not have wondered, indeed, if *Palemon* had made a question of it, whether any uninspired person had authority to call sinners, in imitation of God ; seeing he is himself an example, how grossly they may err who profess to hold the most sacred offices in the church of God : and when such as think themselves authorised call sinners to salvation, they must be understood to call them, not to the testimony of God, but to what these callers understand to be the meaning of the Divine testimony. But this is not the question with *Palemon* : The question with him is, Whether are we to apply the call and oath of God to a way of salvation of his providing, which, in point of sufficiency, is infinite, and can admit of no limitation as to numbers ;
to

willing that they should repent and believe the Gospel; that they should deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ; and that they should believe in him, and have life through his name. Will his blind assertion, "That there is nothing said in the Bible to unbelievers how to get faith, but to believe" vers

to the external means of that salvation, which God has manifested as openly and directly to the rejecters, as to the obedient; and to the divine influences of his Spirit acting by these means, who we are assured may be grieved and provoked, by taking none of his counsel, and despising all his reproof? Or are we to apply this divine solicitude about the perishing state of sinners, as expressed to engage them in a course of salvation which God himself has declared impossible (for *without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin*); and proposed at the same time, upon terms which God has as expressly declared impossible for men to fulfil, for *by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified*? Would this Author have it established in any sense, that God takes pleasure in the death of sinners? Certainly sin itself entered (which it was within the compass both of the foreknowledge and power of God to have prevented) without his having pleasure in sin: And why may not the condemnation of sinners come to pass also without his having any pleasure therein? If that was appointed to happen in respect of sin, which God had no pleasure in; may not that be ordained not to happen in regard to salvation, which he declares he has pleasure in? But, *who hath resisted his will*? None hath, nor can resist it, as the term is applicable to the infallible course of his providence; which is wisely adjusted to engross the events of the most wicked counsels and designs of men and devils, and give them a direction impenetrable by us, tho' we are sure worthy of his perfections. But, *who hath not resisted the will of his grace and nature*? Inconsiderate and headstrong men, who are ambitious of finding truth no where but in their own terms, cleave to a literal expression; avoid explications, and will sacrifice the most solemn truths to an ambiguous term, rather than admit of a distinction in it. If God willed not the death of sinners, or had no pleasure in

“vers how to keep it,” be enough to balance the plain Word of God; and to condemn the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles; who, by his authority and express command, made it the constant subject of their sermons both to Jews and Gentiles—that *they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance,*

in it, why do any perish? It is a bold question, I own; but it is incumbent on those to answer it, who are confident enough to put it. God has said he has no pleasure in the death of sinners, and yet many die; how then is his truth supported? How has he shown he has no pleasure in the death of sinners? I shall only be bold enough to answer in the negative; Not by calling them into a course in which he has declared no flesh can ever be justified in his sight. God willed not sacrifice nor offering? Was this the less true, that rivers of blood were shed in sacrifice posterior to that declaration; which yet could not have happened, if the providence of God had willed otherwise?

I must observe, that the Spirit of God has supported this distinction in the most silencing declaration of his Sovereignty contained in the whole Scriptures, Rom. ix. — *whom he will he hardeneth.* — How doth God say he hardeneth? — *What if* (a silencing supposition, tho’ it should be so, but no affirmative that God cannot make another account of the matter) *God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?* Does God then exercise long-suffering, only with an intention to harden the impenitent? Or has it that effect only under the direction of his providence, upon many of those whom he wills to lead to salvation thereby? We have his own answer, in the same Epistle, Rom. ii. 4, 5. *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hard and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath.* — And how does long-suffering harden? *Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the children of men are set in them to do evil.* — Thus it is, that the Scripture explains

lance: which, I am very sure, will be found to comprehend as much, and even precisely the same things which the Prophet calls the men to, whom he addresses; who were so far from being believers, that they were blasphemous murmurers against him.

But *Palæmon*, it is likely, will lay great stress upon the account the Prophet gives of the righteousness to which the promise of life is annexed. These promises, he alledges, belong originally to the law of nature: that is, I suppose, the natural knowledge of God and his law, or the indelible dictates of conscience; which he tells us strange things of. The law of Moses, he says,

explains how he hardens whom he will. Can any then be so presumptuous, as to confound the will of God's providence with the will of his grace? when he himself has declared, that while his grace proposeth one end by the means he uses, another issue may happen under the influence of the same means; only retaining the Divine distinction of these means,---as intended by God to lead to repentance, and as abused by the wickedness of men to treasure up unto themselves wrath.

There is another important question necessary to be proposed to *Palæmon*, and which he would do well to weigh deliberately before he answers it, as it may direct him further to adjust his views of these passages of *Ezekiel* which he has so profanely sullied and so deliberately, viz. If there were any backsliding believers in the Jewish church (as there always have been and are in the church of God), when this Divine call was proclaimed by *Ezekiel*; what was the language of that call to them? Did it direct them to apostatize from grace, to seek the righteousness of works by their own obedience? Or did it call them to return to him from whom they had backslidden? Had these calls one meaning to such; and another directly contrary meaning to careless sinners, who neither looked to the law nor to the end of the law for salvation? Job xl. 8. *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*

says, is a perfect copy of this ; and of course has the same privileges of having life and death depending on the observance of it, and it is only by the perfect observance of it that a right to life can be had. " By the law of Moses no man could obtain life but by his own personal obedience. But here, by the gracious and sovereign edict of him whom it becomes to act above and beyond all law, for the relief of the guilty ; commandment is given to the Son of the Highest, to fulfill the law given by Moses for transgressors, that so they might live together with him, by his righteousness.—This commandment, or royal grant of life, was ratified by the blood of Christ when he died a sacrifice for sin, &c." I will not say any thing of this last part of his plan ; which he tells us, in another place, could not be made out but by one worthy to obey and suffer for all : but I believe, it is the same upon the matter with that which he founds the constitution of grace upon, and subordinates it to the covenant or law of works ; a sort of *succedaneum*, or, as some very properly call it in this view, a *remedial law* ; an after provision, on the failure of what was ordained the only way to life. Any man may try, at leisure, how this doctrine can be reconciled with what we are as sure of as the testimony of God can make us, namely, That Jesus Christ was set up from everlasting, and the way of bringing mankind into eternal life by him adjusted and ascertained in the eternal councils of the unchangeable God, exactly as it is laid down in the New Testament Record ; and that the first Adam and his covenant was no more but the figure of him who was to come. By which it will appear that our new Doctor's plan is, just the Record of God inverted, and turned upside down.

It would make too large a digression, to set this momentous affair in its proper light : A remark or two upon the foundations he builds on, will answer my present purpose.

Palamon

Palæmon has found, what quite escaped the Apostle *Paul's* observation, a law which could give life. But I will be bold to say, it is a law of his own hatching, without any shadow of a foundation in the revelation God has made of his law. The first law we find any mention made of in divine revelation, is the law given our first father in paradise; where the law of nature must have been in its perfect state. We find no promise of life there, but that which he was in possession of; nor even of the continuance of that, any further than was implied in the threatening of death: And this was not put upon his obedience or doing of any kind, but his forbearing the fruit of a certain tree. On the transgression of that, an end was put for ever to man's living by doing. Faith in the promised Seed, and the grant of eternal life in him, became the only way in which man could live. That, and the duties and exercises of love natively arising out of it, established and enforced by divine authority, is the only law of God's giving which mankind have ever been under, since the sentence was given which fixed mankind in their present mortal state. And whatever law has been imagined by *Palæmon*, or any body else, which is not founded in, and subordinated to the established constitution of grace; neither is, nor can be any part of the law of God.

The only one *Palæmon*, with the help of all his counterfeit edicts, can pitch upon, is the Law of Moses; and it is indeed the only one that can be found in the Bible, which can bear any colour. But, not to lay any weight on what is obviously true, that this was not a law given to mankind, but singly to the Jewish nation; it can by no means answer *Palæmon's* views, as it is in no sense the same with what he calls the Law of Nature; nor has it any promise of eternal life annexed to the observance of it, except as it is subordinated to the constitution of grace.

That it cannot be, as *Palæmon* calls it, an authentic edition of the Law of Nature, as he views it, will ea-

sily appear to any one who has ever read the Books of Moses. It is a complex system of what one may call the Municipal Laws of the nation; the rules of what they call Morality and Civil government: but the far greatest part of it, and indeed the principal one, which all the rest are subservient to, consists in religious institutions and ritual observances. If this is the case, then *Palæmon* must either say, that these are parts of his Law of Nature, or that they are no part of Moses's Law: For he must not attempt to separate what God has put together; and put together in such a manner, that they cannot be separated, without perverting and destroying the whole.

But *Palæmon* finds that throughout the New Testament, and especially in Paul's epistles, there is a very direct opposition stated between the Law and the Gospel, and that they are represented as two different covenants; and thence takes occasion to bestow some very severe correction on these Divines, and I believe they are all that have written upon the subject, who make the old and new covenant or testament only different dispensations of the same covenant of grace.

To set this affair in its true light, we must consider the Law of Moses in a twofold view:—As it was a grant or disposition of the promised land, and the terms on which it was to be held by the Israelites:—Or, as it was ultimately designed, a sensible representation, a type or figure of spiritual and unseen things; the chief object of that faith which Abraham and all his true children had.

In the first view, the law of Moses was really in the strictest sense a law; but a law which no other nation under heaven had any concern in but the Israelites. This they were bound to a very exact observance of in every point; but especially that part which concerned the Tabernacle and Temple worship and service: because, on the observance of these, the very design of their separation from other nations depended:

ed: In these they were witnesses for God; and preferred the instituted representation of the constitution of grace, and the way to eternal life, pure and untainted. But in this national covenant there were no promises or threatnings except temporary ones, relating to their possession of Canaan, and their peaceable and prosperous enjoyment of life there. And it must be observed that, even in this view, they held not their lives and possessions by their obedience either to the civil or moral part of the law: They held it originally on a grant of pure sovereign grace by promise; and their forfeiture was yearly and daily acknowledged, by the daily as well as occasional sacrifices; and, in a special manner, by these on the annual great day of expiation; wherein they give us a very proper representation of the true Israel, and their way of holding the eternal inheritance.

But the law given by Moses, the Apostle assures us, neither did nor could set aside the promise made to Abraham; that it was in his seed only the blessing could be obtained; and that, in this view, the law was exactly calculated to lead the faith of the worshippers beyond the figures and shadows they had in their hands, the blood of bulls and of goats; which could have no further effect than purifying the flesh, and removing such defilements as made them incapable of access to God in the external ordinances of his worship; but could by no means *purge the conscience from dead works*. That honour was reserved to the blood of Jesus, the one Seed to whom the promise of the blessing was made; and on him the faith of all the worshippers terminated, who knew what they were doing. This is the sense which all the Prophets put upon the Law; as the Apostle expressly quotes one of them asserting, That it was not the man who was righteous by doing, but he who is righteous by faith, that should live. Without entering thus by faith into the spirit and design of the Law, none could be said to observe or obey it. And those who did, were as really

Christians as *Palamon*, or any of his friends, may imagine themselves to be. So that he had no reason to represent the Old Testament times as a ministration of justice, which was never cleared up until Christ appeared. The Apostle indeed calls the giving the law at Sinai, the *ministry of condemnation and of death*; because it could not give life any other way but as a schoolmaster to lead to Christ, by shutting up men unto the faith, which subsisted then only in the promise of him; but when Christ came, the matter of the promise, what was believed, came to be fully revealed.

And from this will plainly appear, how the law comes to be spoke of so very differently under the Old and the New Testament. In the Old it is spoken of with all the honour and respect, and all the saving effects assigned to it, that the Gospel of Christ is commended for in the New. But, when the Substance and End of the Law appeared, it became not only weak and unprofitable, but extremely pernicious and destructive, for this plain reason, that the spirit and life-giving part, the promise and blessing of Abraham, was now departed from it,—and exhibited where the Law itself, in its right construction, declared it to lie. And, at the same time, we may see how justly Moses could say, *The man that doth these things*, that observes the statutes and judgments God had given them, *shall live in them*: And how, with equal justice, the Apostle pitches upon this very definition of the Law to prove its direct contrariety to the Gospel of grace; as it was then blindly and ignorantly insisted on, and is now by *Palamon*,—as a Law which, by the mere observance of it, could give life. Or, is it to be imagined, that the Apostle asserted what would have overturned, at once, the whole of that doctrine which he had so zealously contended for, and insisted on, viz. That it was not by doing of any kind, but by pure sovereign grace, that men could live?

But

But *Palemon* still pleads, and worthy *Juniur* insists with yet more magisterial authority, That what *Ezekiel* pitches upon, are none of the ceremonial or typical institutions, but all of them the duties enjoined by the Law of Nature * : yet I say, that they are the duties enjoined by the Law of Moses, and all these duties as they stand there: For in this only comprehensive view can one come up to the import of the expression, *Doing what is lawful and right.*

But he has made it his business in a special manner, wherever he can hook it in, to expose the call directed by the Prophet to his hearers; To cast away all their iniquities, to make them a new heart and a new spirit, and to turn and live. This, he says, implies so evidently working for life †, and puts men so directly

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on

* It is false that the duties there mentioned are such only as are enjoined by the Law of Nature. For besides that the negative—*hath not eaten upon the mountains nor lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel*—implies the contrary, namely, adherence to the service of God as appointed by the law: Besides that, it is also expressly said, *Ezek. xviii. 9. Hath walked in my statutes, &c.* which, with every Reader who has not some sinister use for the contrary assertion, must include the whole worship of God instituted by the Law.

† *Palemon* should have taken a second view of the terms of the call, *Ezek. xviii.* before he had taken up his pen to write against the Author of *Theron and Aspasio*. The terms imply not working, but creating for life; and it establishes, beyond the reach of evasive cavils, what is already observed, That there is every where, in the constitution of grace, a line of truth and another of duty, or, in more proper terms, a line of grace and promise, and another of calls and obedience to these calls, inseparably twisted together. But as the whole importance of *Palemon's* volumes lies in denying the latter of these; without which, it seems, he thought he could not pronounce a final and decisive sentence of condemnation against the popular doctrine

on self-justifying labour, that it can have no other intention but to convince men of their inability to save themselves. And a great deal of spiteful drollery he has lavished out on the ridiculous images he frames to himself, of a man labouring to squeeze conversion, faith, &c. out of his own heart. It is an observation that was in the world, long before *Palæmon* or I were born, That there is nothing required of, or enjoined mankind, as duty, which God has not left a promise of giving or working in them; nor is there a promise in the Bible which can be fulfilled to men, but by engaging them in the corresponding duty. Particular instances are needless; for I know of no exception. However absurd it must be in man to command impossibilities, it is by no means so in God, with whom nothing is impossible; and for a man to create anew his heart and spirit, is not justifying labour of any kind, -- but one of the great impossibilities sinners are called to, which God must perform, and he only. When our Lord, in the days of his flesh, commanded the sick to be whole, the maimed and palsied to rise and walk, the man with the withered hand to stretch it out, -- it was impossible for them to obey; but the command carried health, strength, and life in it.* How then dare *Palæmon* laugh at a man, who, in the faith of God's promise to give faith,

doctrine by lump at his tribunal: it is to be hoped the specimen he has produced, of his manner of commenting away the gracious calls of God to sinners, in his audacious gloss of these two chapters in *Ezekiel*, will be sufficient to put the lovers of truth upon their guard; to examine both his plan of Apostolic doctrine, and the spirit and tendency of his plea against all the professors of Christianity, -- except such as subscribe to every article, without exception, of his confession and commentaries upon the Scriptures.

* This argument is illustrated by the very paragraph he quotes from *E. Erskine*, p. 269. 270.

faith, repentance, a new heart and a new spirit, &c. attempts to believe, repent, and the other correspondent duties? In the height of his buffoonry on the withered hand, he dare not say it was not the man's duty to attempt to stretch it out, though he knew well he had no power to do it until it was given him; for it was the *withered hand*, not the recovered hand, he was commanded to stretch out. But what spirit, sure none but his *great genius**, could move him to ask with an insolent sneer, "Was it Lazarus's duty to come forth? And why was it not? "Why? the man happened to be dead." And what was that, or any parallel case, when he calls who is the Resurrection and the Life, and who can with as much ease make the dead hear his voice as the living†.

But

* A designation *Palamon* gives to the Devil.

† The two following observations upon the divine calls in Scripture, may be of use to clear them up from every gloss and misinterpretation tending to obscure or pervert them. 1. Whenever God, by his Prophets, calls the wicked and transgressors of his law to return, observe and obey it, and to enjoy the privileges thereof; he must call them to the knowledge, enjoyment and obedience of all that he planned and formed his own law to witness unto them and instruct them in: And if the whole law was no more than a witness unto the righteousness of God, and his mercy in Jesus Christ; he called them to hear and obey what it said and pointed out, as its own end and fulfilment. Thus, in fact, we see, by comparing *Malach. iv. 4. 5. 6.* with *Luke i. 16. 17.* That, when the Prophet says, *Remember ye the law of Moses;—the statutes and the judgments*; an inspired writer interprets it, *turning many unto the Lord their God, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* If this was not the Gospel, and if John the Baptist preached it not to a generation of vipers; then it may as fairly be concluded, that the Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles have to this day preached no other gospel to sinners--than the law.

But *Palenion's* apostolical plan will admit of no doing, nor attempting any thing; nor of any assistance or concurrence of the divine Spirit or power, to excite or enable for any thing: For there is no grace but the bare atonement; and the bare belief of that salutary truth does the business at once. 'It comforts

law and the obedience of works. John baptised many who repented at his call, and they were baptised into the doctrine of Christ; not unto Moses, neither to the deeds of the law: amongst whom was *Apollos*, who preached Christ upon John's baptism; and the knowledge of him he learned, from the repentance which John preached to the hypocrites and vipers of his generation.

2. Whenever God in his word calls impotent sinners to do what is impossible not only for them, but what is impossible for any being but the Creator to do, and what he testifies is his own prerogative; in that case, he can only mean that they are called to work, because it is God who works in them both to will and to do. It implies that that call of God, reaching their ears and their understandings, is the finger, the hand of God, his creative power set to work,---his Holy Spirit, whom they are called not to resist and grieve: — *Make you a new heart, and a new spirit.* — Is this the work of God, or their own work they are called to join issue in? In short, this impossible thing that sinners are called to in *Ezek. xviii. 31.* God promises, by the same Prophet, he will do himself, as in *chap. xxxvi. 26.*

It cannot be too particularly noticed, that that very manner of speaking in Scripture, *Isa. lxxv. 1.* — *I am found of them that sought me not,* — which is used by *Palenion* to make void the calls of God to sinners, and to ridicule the absurdity of their endeavouring to raise their hearts from an indifference about salvation unto a firm belief of the truth, is connected in the next words, *ver. 2.* with the most positive proof of the truth of these calls: — *All the day I have spread out my hands unto a rebellious people.* — With what freedom the Scriptures are used, to model and sense them to our weak and silly plans! This passage, which plainly declares the Gospel was preached to

forts as soon as known." It brings the gift of righteousness home to the soul; and that is all the sinner "wants." But will the divine calls and commands to receive and improve this same salutary truth, mar the power and efficacy of it, any more than his imaginary calls to sinners "to be perfect?" And with this advantage

to the Gentiles who were not seeking after it, because the Jews rejected it, and refused the assistance of these Almighty arms stretched out all the day to them for their salvation: This passage, and such like, I say, are glossed by *Palæmon*,---as if they implied that none were in the way of salvation, or could be so, who were seeking for it. *I am found of them that sought me not.* — But tho' this were the strict and proper application of the text, his conclusion is like many other of his false insidious ones; for the proposition in these words does not imply, that God is not found of any that seek him; yet too many of that Gentleman's distinguishing positions are founded upon such deduced negatives.

There is in Scripture an indissolvable connection established between the call of the Gospel, the exertion of our minds in obedience to it, and the efficacy of Divine power producing what he calls sinners to. The man with the withered hand might have philosophised, as reasoners against the calls of the Gospel do, and have said, "I am not called to do what must be done by Almighty power; I cannot stretch out a withered hand; put life into it, and then I'll stretch it out." — Yet Christ commands him to stretch out his withered hand. Why, there was as little communication between the man's will and that dead member, as between the will of a sinner and that conversion of the heart which the power of God performs by his law, *Psal. xix.* Does it destroy the propriety of sinners being dead, and that Divine power alone can quicken them, that such dead souls are at the same time possessed of powers which can apprehend God, distinguish between good and evil, know and approve the things that are excellent, and apprehend what God says in his word? Do these things destroy the propriety of sinners being dead,
any

advantage too, that here there is no delusion or reserve; all is fair and open. At the same time that God calls and commands with the greatest earnestness and authority, he assures us, that of ourselves we can do nothing, and are not sufficient so much as to think any thing; that what he commands us to make or to do, is all in his hand; and that it is so in his hand, that he has a sovereign and undoubted right to give or withhold at pleasure; to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and to harden whom he will. This is fair dealing. And this has been God's uniform and unchangeable way of dealing with mankind through all the several periods, from Adam down to this day. There never has been a command given,
or

any more than it destroyed the miraculous power of Christ, that the man's will was addressed who had the withered hand; and that he was desired to will the stretching of it out while yet it was withered, tho' his will could move that arm only in consequence of its being healed.

But every sinner is as dead as Lazarus was when in his grave. What then? Every such dead sinner is at the same time possessed of powers, which stand in the same connection with him in that dead state,--as the man's will did with his withered hand; these powers God can and does address, and they can apprehend what God says; and their doing every thing which God calls them to, Does that take the work out of God's hand? Did the man's willing the motion of his hand rob Christ of the work, in giving the hand power to move.

I shall only add, that it is not denied, that *calling* is mentioned where certain salvation is ascertained to be connected with it, as *Rom. viii. 30.* but at the same time it cannot be denied, that *calling* is also spoken of where that consequence does not follow:—*Many are called, but few are chosen*;—called, to what? To the belief of a truth they had no welcome to the consequences of? No; but to a supper provided for them, which they set light by, and excused themselves from partaking of.

or the least encouragement to attempt obedience, but in an absolute dependence on the grant of grace, and the free promise established and ratified in the blood of Jesus.

So that *Palæmon* has nothing left him to found on but his Law of Nature; "the natural knowledge of God and his law," And "the indelible dictates of conscience." And this I take to be the rise of that doughty performance we proposed to take a view of: For if this fails him, he will have nothing left to distinguish himself by from *ASPASIO* and the wicked Popular Preachers, but *absurdity* and *insolence*. And, if I am able to judge, he has given us nothing there to support his view of that law, but a medley-composition of these two, oddly jumbled together.

S E C T. V.

A View of the Law of Nature.

BEFORE we enter upon particulars, it will be proper to try what light may be brought into this subject; which *Palæmon* has, either very ignorantly, or very artfully, huddled up in the greatest confusion.

The Law of Nature has been long treated as a thing extremely sacred; and is really so, when rightly understood and stated. From the time that the original facts on which it is founded, -- were either forgotten or neglected, it has been the business of philosophers to establish it upon another bottom. And so long as they confine themselves to the business of a present life, it was no matter of difficulty to gather, from the nature and circumstances of mankind, what was their true interest. On this plan, many systems have been contrived, which have not wanted usefulness; and, by the help of civil authority, have contributed greatly to the interest of societies, great and small;

small; and will hold in a great measure, though there was no Deity either known or regarded.

But though all righteous laws must be founded in Nature, that is, suited unto the constitution and circumstances of mankind; yet it is, I believe, an agreed point, That the constitutions and laws established by civil authority, -- are not what they call the Law of Nature: and to this day it is not agreed, where to fix the principle from which it is deduced; and yet more difficult, where to fix the obligation or binding power which constitutes the nature of what we call Law.

Palæmon and some modern philosophers tell us, That Nature teaches us, and by Nature we are bound to obey. But may one ask, what is this Nature, or what authority has it to oblige? Why; say they, Nature is the voice of God in the conscience of man. But until I know God, and find myself under his authority, I can have no sense or conscience at all about him; and will mind him no more than that haughty King of Egypt, who said, *Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?*

This has put most of those, who have handled this subject, to bring in a God to give authority to their system. *Palæmon's*, particularly, cannot stand without it. But then, a philosopher must have no recourse to Revelation: For besides that testimony is but an indirect proof, this would put the whole upon what they call a supernatural bottom; and *Palæmon* rests it upon what men naturally know of God. But what knowledge is natural or supernatural, is not so easily determined; and indeed impossible, unless it is first determined what Nature is, and where to fix the standard of what is natural or supernatural. Could we certainly discover what measures of knowledge man brings into the world with him, how and by what means he comes to improve, and what length his knowledge may be carried by these means; we might stand some chance, and it is the only one

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we have, of discovering what, and how far any knowledge merits the appellation of *natural*. Great pity it is, that men of profound indagation should forget that they were once children; and by what means they arrived at that immense stock of erudition, which exalts them so high above the rest of the species.

It would be much easier to fill a volume in the pursuit of such an useful inquiry; to mark out the slender stock one sets out upon; to trace the rising mind through the several degrees of improvement, and where of necessity it must stop; than to sketch it out with any degree of exactness, in such short hints as my design confines me to. And yet, if we will but call in, every one of us, with candour and ingenuity, our own experience, and what may fall under our observation, -- a few short hints may answer the purpose.

In the first view we take of Nature, we find the profoundest philosopher entering upon Being in the shape of a poor helpless infant; such a small remove from a mere vegetable, that he is greatly worse provided than any animal we know. Ignorant of every thing, and hardly conscious of his own being, until he feels it by his wants and cravings. No instincts to direct him so much as to proper sustenance, or what is good or bad for him: Incapable of making any observations, and as incapable of making any advantage by them; and, were it not for the care of those about him, the poor creature must perish the very day he is born: But at the same time so made, that, by proper care and culture, he may grow up to higher measures of perfection than any man has yet attained.

And happily for the poor destitute creature, he is born into society; and naturally passes a great part of

of his life in absolute dependence on his parents, or those on whose care he is cast : and lives in a manner wholly by implicate faith, and in implicate obedience ; except when he indulges his own passions and fancies, which generally cost him dear one way or other. He is indeed provided with a compleat system of external senses ; nothing, that can come near enough either to give him pleasure or pain, can escape his observation : at the same time that he is conscious of what passes, and, by the help of that wonderful thing we call *memory*, can retain a sort of image of the things when they are no more present ; and, by another very extraordinary constitutional power, he can compare one with another, and compound, divide, and unite things or parts of things,—and image to himself what he never saw, or perhaps never had any being.

But the most extensive observation goes only a short way ; and were it not for the informations and instructions we receive in society, our knowledge would be confined within a very narrow compass. In society we hear of many things we never had occasion to see ; yet can make nothing of them, but that there is something, we know not what, expressed by these names or terms ; unless they can, by some means or other, be brought under our observation, so as we can image them to ourselves,—or, as a philosopher would say, form an idea of them. Shewing the things, is the most direct and perfect way : Where that cannot be done, images, pictures, or models of them, is the next ; and these need a good deal of adjusting, to prevent mistakes. Where these fail, likeness and resemblance is the next resource. But if we know nothing that bears any resemblance or likeness, we have nothing to image them by ; and then our knowledge is at a stand.

The actions and passions of men cannot be imaged, but in their sensible effects.—We have nothing to form our conceptions of them on, but what we have observed

observed in ourselves. And the similarity there, is all founded on a presumption, that the human constitution is the same in every individual; which, by reason of accidental differences, often deceives.

When we go beyond the material world, and attempt to form an idea of a Spirit, we immediately find the thing impossible: For we can have no idea of any thing but what we can form an image of. Neither have we any model to form our conceptions on, but our own spirits; and to adjust the analogy perfectly, is out of our power. We have no direct perception of any spirit whatsoever: and our spirits are so closely united with matter, that their most spiritual actions are exerted, not only in, but by our corporeal organs; and carry in them such a train of material imagery, that all the names and language we express them in, are taken from material or sensible actions: And hence it is, that we find it so hard to believe what we cannot form some image or idea of.

There is only one other way by which it has been generally thought human knowledge has been, and may yet further be much promoted, viz. the connection which there is between causes and their effects. And where both the cause and effect fall fairly under our observation, that we can certainly conclude them inseparable, much useful knowledge may be obtained. But where the cause lies entirely beyond the reach of all our means of perception; and where we have no means by which we can certainly conclude any thing to be an effect, or that it once was not; our knowledge is at an end, we can form no conclusion.

Therefore whatever acts or effects of power we have never known any thing similar or analogous to, we very readily, but rashly, conclude impossible; because we have no medium to form any conceptions on, how the thing may be. And however natural it is for men

to give and receive information and instruction, none can inform another of what he does not know, and especially of what never could fall under his observation, unless as a report or hearsay.

No man hath seen God at any time: No man saw or could see this universe arise out of nothing: No man can form any notion of a power adequate to such an effect. Whatever changes happen in particular parts, the fabrick and structure of the heavens and the earth stand without the least variation, as they did at the time that there were not any men to observe them; neither is there the least symptom of any tendency toward perishing. Yet the notion of a God, a Creation, and the once Nonexistence or Nothingness of all the visible universe, have always been in the world. The question is, how it came there? A question this which cannot be determined by a fair trial what man can do toward the discovery, unless one were brought up, as Chevalier *Ramsay* represents his *Mercury*, separate from all means of information. For men have the tradition; and all that is left to them is, to try what can be said for or against it. The philosophers who reasoned fairly, without assuming *data* which they could not prove, declared creation impossible; any further than that there might possibly be some very wise and powerful Being, who perhaps could and did put things into that order which we now find them in; for even this they had no conclusive proof of; and as they imagined there were many flaws and imperfections, these were discreetly imputed to the untoward stubbornness of the materials he had to work upon; which furnished another argument, such as it was, against creating power.

Those who have the Bible in their hands, can easily answer, that as none but the Creator himself could reveal his eternal power; he has done it so effectually, that it never came to be a question, whether there was a God. But as the vain imaginations of men had brought in a number of pretenders, it was very warmly disputed, which was the true God. The proper decision

cision of this question, was to be determined by another question; Who created the heavens and the earth? and that again was to be determined by two more; Who could certainly and infallibly declare all events, both such as are past and such as are yet to come? and who had the absolute command of all the powers of nature, to controul and dispose of them at pleasure? * There the Record rests the evidence; not on subtle metaphysical deductions, nor unintelligible instincts and impressions, but on plain substantial facts, equally convincing and intelligible to the meanest peasant and the most learned philosopher; and which must be acknowledged not only the most convincing, but the most natural way of conveying instruction.

Yet many pious men, finding the notion of a Deity so universal, and the truth of so great importance, that the very being even of a Revelation seemed to them to rest on it,—persuaded themselves, that this fundamental truth must be some how or other inlaid in the very constitution of men, which they therefore called: *innate theology*. The same that *Lucius*, in his simpering way, says he thinks he remembers to have seen in some of our systems.

Those who mean any more by this, than the old philosophers did by their occult qualities, something they knew not what; and who minded that they were children before they were men; in effect explain it quite away: For finding that all men are born atheists, and the most part, after all the pains taken about them, but little better;—they profess to mean no more by it, but that man is so made, that whenever he comes to understand the terms, in which this great truth is expressed, he cannot help assenting to it. But when does he come to understand the terms? Never sure, until he knows what is meant by them, that is, until he is informed of a God: Thus, this great truth is no more innate than all common truths, even the very least of them are.—And we are left to our choice to gather this knowledge, either from the authentic history (and

H. 3.

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* Isa xli, 21, 22, 23.

that received and transmitted by the ordinary course of information) he has given us of his works and ways, works indisputably his; or from the metaphysical quibblings of the philosophers.

But this is not the single piece of very general belief, which could never have entered the world by any of the ordinary methods of human perception or observation; nor by any deductions that can be made from such principles.

A Trinity in the perfect unity of the Deity; that God has or was to have a Son born of a woman; and, we may add, a future state of rewards and punishments, when death has put an end to our present being: the two first, it is evident, could never have entered the heart of man by any ordinary means; and tho' philosophers have attempted to support the last by such reasons as they could find, it will easily appear how trifling they are,—when it is duly considered, that the natural immortality of any creature is really a contradiction in terms. The duration of creature existence depends as entirely on the Creator's will, as its beginning did; and can only be known by a declaration of it.

There have been likewise, from the earliest ages, a set of religious practises,—which neither reason, nor any known principles in the human constitution, could ever have suggested; such as, the universally practised methods of obtaining the favour of the God they worshipped; and pardon or the putting away of their sins and offences; temples, altars, priests, sacrifices, with the different and numerous lustrations and purifications, fasts, and feasts; by which they imagined wrath was turned away, and the favour of their Deities obtained. Philosophers and wise men looked upon them as the grossest absurdities; and did what they could to draw off the people from their dependence on them, to the plain duties of morality, just as they do now among us. But the reverential regard which was paid them as divine

divine institutions, was by far too strong for all their reasonings: which could avail nothing, until Christianity at once discovered their true intention, and put a full end to them; as being of no more use, now when there is no more occasion for them. In this light, we can easily perceive, that they are all derived from the divinely instituted worship, however greatly corrupted and misapplied.

The wisdom of the first ages, it is certain, lay all in traditionary knowledge, which the ignorant Greeks called the Barbaric philosophy; and those who made the completest collection of the original facts were honoured with the title of *wise men*, as far down as Pythagoras, who modestly renounced the title: But still the practice continued, until the Athenian Droll sneered the sacred truth out of the world; and the modest title of *philosophy* degenerated into the most enormous pride of human understanding, founded on this proposition, That nothing should be received for truth which they could not make a perfect account of. And had not common sense been too strong a balance against their unnatural reasonings, all valuable truth had been entirely lost out of the world.

To determine therefore, with any measure of accuracy, what knowledge, and what measure of it, is natural to man,—and consequently what is natural or unnatural of his conduct and behaviour in life; he must be considered in two very different views. *First*, In his original frame and constitution: And *next*, in the circumstances and situation his Creator has placed him in, and the means of knowledge and improvement he has afforded him there.

In the *first* view we have of him as a creature, he is originally nothing; and at his entrance into Being but a small remove from it. The best account can be given of him is mere emptiness, having all the supports and enjoyments of life to suck in from without; but in this very emptiness and self-insufficiency lies his great excellency, what we call his *capacity*.
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Thence arises that stupendous system of appetites and cravings, affections and passions; these violent and insatiable desires of what we call happiness, that is, such things as give pleasure. But his gross ignorance of every thing, exposes him to continual errors and mistakes; and would, of itself, effectually destroy him before he had experience enough to be able to judge what is good or evil. Whatever pleases, catches the heart; and nothing but what pleases better, can disengage. This is what may be called *mere nature*; and is no where to be found but among children and wild men.

But whatever higher advantages men enjoy by the circumstances in which they are placed, and the improvement of our natural powers by the proper culture they meet with; these may, in a very proper sense, be called *natural*. And, on a fair survey of the provision which we find made by our wise and bountiful Creator, it will be found,—that if we fall short of happiness, it must be owing entirely to the neglect or abuse of the opportunities put into our hands, of knowing and pursuing the only path that leads to it. What that provision is, we may partly gather from experience and observation of what measures of knowledge are within our reach; but no where with such exactness and certainty, as in the Sacred Record.

The first view that it gives of man is, That he, and all things which he subsists on and enjoys, are God's creatures. It is a compleat system of perfect knowledge, comprehending in it all that is worth knowing; and sufficient, if properly improved, to guard against all that error and folly which mars and destroys our happiness. The first man was formed immediately by the Creator's hand; and every man is as properly so, thro' the intervention of the means he has established in the course of natural generation, by which the very same power is exerted. As the whole of this must be acknowledged entirely owing to, and conducted by the measures of pure sovereign grace, (for surely nothing could have either claim or merit) it was free to him

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to allot every creature what proportion of being and perfection he pleased; to appoint them their several stations, and purposes that they were to answer in his world; how long they should continue in being; and by what means he saw fit to exert his supporting power. The native consequence of this must be, that no creature can subsist but by the mere grace and favour of the Creator, nor by any other means than he has ordained and appointed for them to live by: and it follows of course, that if any will neglect this, and attempt to live by any other means, he must perish inevitably, and very deservedly. This is the great fundamental Law of Nature, and the immediate result of creature-dependence. The contempt, or even neglect of it, is that very thing which we call *sin*; and every sin has more or less of it; which we find marked out by perfect wisdom under the reproachful name of *Folly*; and by this, both angels and man fell from their first state.

We have precisely the same evidence for the existence and character of that divine Person, known among men by the name of *Jesus Christ*; the same proof of his divinity, and that all things were made by him; that we have for the being of any God or any creation: and,—that it is in and by him only, that any grace is shown, or divine power exerted for the benefit or advantage of any creature. It was so in the first creation; and is eminently so in the second, designed to raise up from the rubbish of mankind a set of inhabitants for the new eternal world. Hence no creature, and least of all any of the children of Adam, can hope for any grace or favour from the Creator's hand, or to live by any other means, but by *Jesus Christ*; as he is set forth in that Record which God has made concerning this his blessed Son: Which makes out a second part of the original Law of Nature; and another set of sin and folly, when it is neglected, and men attempt to live any other way but by him.

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We have the very same assurance, that it is only by the Holy Spirit that the blessed Son of God conveys all the grace, which the God of all grace designs for any of mankind; and exerts that quickning and supporting power he is entrusted with, for their benefit and advantage. This makes it in the same manner criminal to attempt either living or doing, but in a believing dependence on the Spirit and grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Upon these three, all the duties we owe to God and to one another, are directly founded; nor is it possible to commit any one sin, or neglect any duty, but either through not believing or neglecting one or other of them. And when we come to know and believe the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what we are warranted to expect from him; the love of God shed abroad in the believer's heart cannot fail to raise him to that joy and peace, which keeps his heart and spirit in that dutiful confidence in and dependence on God, which becomes those who have the honour of a place among his children.

But it will possibly be said, This is all Revelation, and supernatural: I only ask, Is there any grace natural? Is the grace of creation natural or supernatural? Whatever way that question is answered, an answer will be found to this exception. It is every way as natural for mankind to be taught and instructed, as it is to perceive what falls directly within the compass of their observation; or as it is natural for them to have tongues and ears answering one another. And it is hard to say, whether our natural propensity is greatest to give or receive information and instruction, or on which side the greatest pleasure lies. But is it not as natural for a creature to be instructed and taught by his Creator, as by one another; and to be taught in what manner and by what means he is pleased to convey his instruction? It is unquestionably natural for the creature to be absolutely in the Creator's hand, and at his disposal. And if he sees it meet

to raise any of them to a higher station than that which they were first placed in, and accordingly to endue them with higher perfections and powers, or even a constitution entirely new; whether this was gradually or imperceptibly done in this world, or by raising them from the dead: is not this every way as natural as creation; or their birth into this world, which we call the natural one? Nature is nothing but the settled divine constitution, fixing the way in, and the means by which he conveys his grace; or, which is the same thing, in which he exerts his creating and supporting power. And whatever order he sees fit to establish for this purpose, is Nature; and that constitution, is **THE LAW OF NATURE.**

I cannot help observing here, how men will stumble upon a great truth; while they are very earnestly pursuing a very different, and even a contrary intention. The opposers of Revelation, and particularly of the Gospel of Christ, think they have said a great thing, when they assert, That the Gospel can be no other than a republication of the Law of Nature; and support it by an argument, which cannot be easily answered, *viz.* That the all-wise and unchangeable God can never be supposed to supersede or alter any law which he has once established. *Palamon* and *Junius* seem to be of the same opinion; but talk so darkly and inconsistently upon it, that nobody can know what to make of them. The thing, however, is perfectly true. The whole design of the Gospel is, to reduce the rebellious sinner from his vain conversation to his right creature-state, and establish him in it; that is, to live entirely by the grace of the Creator, through Jesus Christ, and his Holy Spirit, forming their hearts into the fear and love of God: to live on their heavenly Father, as they did on their earthly ones when they first entered this world; in an absolute submission and entire resignation to his will, and in perfect faith and confidence in him.

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There is another very momentous truth which *Palemon* has, much in the same manner, stumbled on. I say, stumbled on; because I cannot find any just foundation he has for such a conclusion. It is, That Conscience is what we know without reasoning. I do not here meddle with his peculiar notion of Conscience; we shall meet with that afterward. But taking Conscience for that inward consciousness one has of truth and duty bound upon him by Divine authority,—which makes a party within him, against all the perverse lustings, affections and passions, which betray him into rebellion against or neglect of God; no process of reasoning can establish such an authority. It is by a report, a testimony, God himself instructing, testifying and bearing witness to the truth; with such evidence and power, as admits of no reasoning either for or against it. And it is certainly true, that until one is taught of God, and made to feel his authority, tho' there may be something like what they call remorse and sorrow on some by-considerations; yet Conscience will never have either light or authority enough to convict the rebel, and much less to recover him to his natural creature-state.

Here I have reason to apprehend, that however this must be acknowledged a true state of the Law of Creation, and consequently of the Law of Nature; and that those who have the Record in their hands are abundantly provided in light and evidence: yet it will be asked, What shall become of that numerous part of mankind who have long been, and still are, so far from having the benefit of Revelation, that they are strangers even to the knowledge of the true God? And this is the grand pillar on which *Palemon* and his friends erect, and endeavour to establish their imaginary Law of Nature; and triumph most unmercifully upon it. I think it might be sufficient to say,—that they who have not Written Revelation, have as much light, and as many opportunities
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of improving it, as their Creator has seen fit to allot them; and as none of them has any claim of right to plead upon, we are sure he has done them no wrong; for he may certainly do what he will with his own. We may further assure ourselves, that he has taken such measures, as none of mankind shall have any reason to complain of his having dealt hardly, much less unjustly or unfairly, with any of them. What these are, the day will declare, when every secret shall be brought to light; and when *Jurms*, and his associates, if he has any, in his presumptuous queries, and yet more presumptuous decisions, will be found,——I shall only say, to have taken too much upon them. But, however, it is our proper business to take notice of what God has done for all the nations in the world.

As it is not, nor indeed can be refused, by any one who acknowledges the Divine Record, that God revealed himself to all mankind then in being, not only as Creator of heaven and earth, but in all the views we have given of him in Jesus Christ, and that system of grace which is founded in him, and closely connected with what is the only right and natural state of the creature: We have good ground to say, very positively, that men were left inexcusable, tho' he had never done more. By revealing himself as Creator, he put the most instructive volume, viz. this Universe, into their hands, as undoubtedly his work; where his eternal power and Deity is instructed in the most sensible and convincing manner; but displayed with such awful majesty, and terrible resplendency of glory, as can give no hope to such trifling beings as men are, even in their most innocent state; but must fill such as feel themselves sinners, with horror and despair. The most favourable prospect they could form to themselves, must be the loss of their wretched being, or the sense and feeling of it, when death dissolves their present fabric. But even this they cannot promise them-

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selves: For after all the efforts of our natural Theologers, they never have been, nor ever will be able to say, what man has to hope or fear from the hand of his Maker. Nothing, but a plain declaration of the mind of God, can satisfy in a case of such vast importance. Their trifling guesses may amuse such as are careless and at ease; but must go for nothing with a serious inquirer.

Mankind, we are sure, was not left at this uncertainty. But by the Revelation God made of himself in the promised Seed, and the life and immortality which was brought to light in him,---the grand question was satisfyingly resolved, and the way of life fully set before them. Had they been left with this, to be handed down from one generation to another; however it might have been tainted with the imaginations and deceitful reasonings of men,---the main truth, That God was merciful, and that it was consistent with all his perfections, and the laws and measures of his government, to pardon and forgive sin, was never like to be lost; and in fact never was. The conviction of sin, and the persuasion of pardoning grace, never have been separated. And *Palæmon* misrepresents the state of mankind grossly when he separates them; and would persuade us, that nothing was handed down by tradition but a parcel of abominable lies; and that tradition is the great corrupter of truth: whereas, in truth, it is not tradition that corrupts truth; but the lusts and passions of men that corrupt tradition.

For preventing such abuses, the wisdom of our gracious Creator condescended to provide the most proper means,---by representing and figuring out the whole System of Grace, in material emblems and figures; where the method of grace was fairly shadowed out, in the rites and ceremonies of external worship; by which men might, and none might without them, or in any other way, pretend to approach unto God, or expect his gracious acceptance. A
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compleat system of them we have in the Jewish Law ; which I need not repeat. How effectual these were for answering this intention, and preserving the tradition from being lost,---we need no more to satisfy us, but the native issue of them, wherever they were observed. Men could not observe these, without acknowledging themselves sinners ; and that they were at the mercy of the great Sovereign, to whom they, at the same time, professed themselves subject ; that pardon could not be obtained, barely by their repentance and amendment : that they might not so much as approach their God to make their addresses to him, but by a Mediator, Priest,---one taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God ; nor might hope any thing even from his intercession, without a sacrifice and sprinkling of blood as an atonement : and, to mention no more, that it was only in the virtue of the atonement, and the grant of pardon annexed to it, that they could hope to live*.

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* By *Palemon's* own rule of reasoning, we have the very same evidence, that the notions of Divine favour, pardon and the method thereof, were natural to the Gentile world ; as we have for their knowledge of God, and of their own corruption, being so : For as they showed that they had these truths implanted in their hearts, principally by their idolatry,---and (in many cases) depraved sentiments of virtue and vice, tho' they held the distinction ; so they as generally showed, by their superstitious zeal for sacrifices, priests, and other ceremonies of worship,---that the notions of expiation for sin, and of forgiveness, were dictates of their natural conscience. For as the Heathens evidenced their natural knowledge of God, only by holding that truth in unrighteousness ; so, by as steadily and plainly holding the doctrine of forgiveness, and the means thereof, in unrighteousness,---they gave the very same kind of evidence, that the knowledge of these truths was natural to them.

But neither was the world left with these only ; our gracious Creator was pleased to take yet further precautions, for preserving these significant institutions in their original purity. They were, by his special order, and under his particular direction, put into writing ; and committed to a particular people, whom he separated for himself from all the nations of the world---for the keeping and punctual observance of them, as the precise terms on which they held their lives and possessions in the land which he put them in possession of. And, for yet further security against corruptions and abuses ; besides the ordinary authorised teachers, he raised up Extraordinary Prophets from time to time, as particular occasions required. And thus they were placed in the midst of the earth, as Witnesses for God, and the keepers and guardians of his Sacred Oracles ; which is the spring and fountain of all the true knowledge of God that ever was in the world.

But we are by no means to imagine, that, upon the separation of Israel, the rest of the nations were cast out of God's care,---and the right knowledge and worship presently lost out of the world. We are sure, by the Divine Record, that it was not ; but that the true God was acknowledged and worshipped in many whole nations at, and long after the call of Abraham ; and how long it might be kept up by particular persons and families, after the public national worship was corrupted, who can say ? The astonishing manner in which the Israelits were brought out of Egypt, must have made a great noise ; it was intended to do so, to make the name and fame of the God of Israel known among the nations : and it is hardly credible that Rahab the harlot was the only person on whom it made any impression. Hiram King of Tyre appears evidently to have known and acknowledged the true God, and his subjects were not like to be altogether ignorant of him. Their trade and commerce was very extensive ; and there

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was at least a possibility of their propagating, in some measure, the patriarchal religion, where they managed their affairs. The fame of Solomon's wisdom, we are sure, reached very far. The Queen of Sheba could not be the only person who heard of it; and the extensive trade he carried on, must have given the remotest nations an opportunity of coming to the knowledge of the truth. Nor can it be doubted, that some would have curiosity enough, even to make a journey for further information. The ancient Greeks, we know, dealt greatly in this sort of commerce; and, for many ages, travelling into these countries was the ordinary course of education: and the greatest travellers were always their best Divines.

There was yet another providential provision, for maintaining the knowledge of the true God: the Israelites were dispersed throughout the habitable world; first by a partial, and at last by a total captivity and transportation. Nor can it be thought that Naaman's captive girl was the only one, who spake of their religion in the place of their captivity; or that her master's conversion could be without observation or effect. What reputation Daniel and his fellows were in at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and the first Persian Kings; and other Jews under the succeeding ones, where they held the highest posts in the government; we are most certainly informed. Do not Nebuchadnezzar himself, Darius, and even Cyrus——at least in his later days, appear to have been right believers; and can it be imagined their edicts had no effect through their extensive dominions? The same, and rather more honourable posts, we find some of them filling, when Esther came to be Queen; and many of the people of all lands became Jews, for fear of Mordecai. And it is specially to be observed, that by Haman's report, and the Historian's account, the Jews were then very numerous in every province of that empire. Nor were they confined within that;

for by the accounts we have of the following times, under the Greeks and Romans, there was hardly a nation where some of them were not to be found. So that during the whole Old Testament period, it will be impossible to pitch upon any time, when all the inhabitants of the world had not an opportunity of coming to the knowledge of the truth.

There is one circumstance which deserves our particular attention; as it is a strong indication, that the Heathen nations were not cast out of the Divine care: The Prophets, whom God raised up among his chosen people, were not only employed to prophesy concerning them; but some of them were, by express Divine appointment, sent directly to them. The case of Jonah is a noted instance; as he was expressly sent to Niniveh, so his prophesy to that Heathen city, is the only one of his we have upon record. His success in it was very remarkable, and greater than many of those had who were employed among the chosen people. We read, all along from the very original of the Israelites, not only of servants, but strangers, sojourners within their gates; who, tho' they were never incorporate with them by circumcision, were notwithstanding worshipers of the true God: and in after times, we certainly know, there were great numbers of them almost in every nation. So that what the Apostle perceived by God's acceptance of Cornelius, one of these worshipers, holds true in all ages, "That of a truth God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." God is not confined to man's measures; and the saving truth lies in a much smaller compass, than haughty dogmatical Doctors of the Law imagine.

Upon these substantial facts, one would think, nobody could help concluding, That what some have imagined of a Law of Nature, or Natural Religion, either

either impressed upon the constitution by way of instinct; or hammered out by one's natural powers from the impression which surrounding objects make there--- is really unnatural, and confuted by all the observation and experience in the world; and also, concluding, that tho' the foundation of all knowledge is laid in the impressions which external objects make on the constitution,---yet all our improvements are owing to society, and the informations and instructions which we receive there*.

What we have been early taught, and have always from the time we can remember any thing taken for granted, we are apt to imagine purely natural; and because they are really anticipations of reasoning, and exert their strength without it,---we thoughtlessly take it for granted, that they rise naturally from the constitution, as instincts do in brute animals. On the general rules, thus insensibly instilled, the sentiments are formed; and, by habit and custom, so confirmed, that, right or wrong, they will maintain their possession against all the reason in the world. This needs no other evidence, than what we have access to observe every day; that men hold the most unreasonable opinions and practises with the greatest tenaciousness, and the most furious vehemence, against all that attempt to undeceive them. But, in truth, all the knowledge of God at this day, or which ever was in the world, must owe its origin to the Revelation which he has made of himself, and the means he has appointed for preserving and continuing it among men.

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* For a concise and distinct state of which, it may be worth the Reader's pains to consult these short essays, intitled, *Human Nature surveyed by Philosophy and Revelation*. The facts stated in which, *Junius* endeavours to steer as wide of as possible, being rocks dangerous to the bark he pilots.

It is no small presumption in favours of this great truth, That, when every other part of knowledge, all human arts and sciences, have been, from very low beginnings, continually improving to greater perfection; this Divine knowledge has been so far from improving, that it was in a great measure lost; in so much, that the most polite and most civilized nations really worshiped they knew not what; and all the wisdom in the world was so far from recovering them, that they sunk deeper and deeper in ignorance and superstition, until the original facts were revived in the same manner they were originally given.

Something may be said for the Heathen who know no better, and whose anticipations were all in favours of the superstition they were accustomed to, and which prevailed so generally. But what can move those who value themselves on the name and profession of Christianity, to shew such fondness for what has been so long and so shamefully set up, not only in competition with, but in a formed design to juggle out the great ordinance of God for the salvation of mankind? And will *Palæmon*, or *Junius* and his friend *Lucius*, defend it by Scripture? Hard lot of the Scriptures of truth! And presumptuous boldness in man! to prostitute the Sacred Oracles of the Eternal God, to support every whim they take it into their heads to propagate.

And how do they defend it? Even in all the large volume of the Divine Writings which we have in our hands, there are no more but three places that can, by all the skill of a keen disputant, be glossed and paraphrased, so as to give the least colour for a surmise, that the inspired writers had any the least notion of any knowledge of God or his law, but what owed its rise to the Revelation that he had made of himself. And two of these are evidently nothing to the purpose.

The Apostle Paul, in his speech to the men of Lystra, had no occasion at all to say any thing on the
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being of a God. They were so full of that persuasion, that they imagined the Gods were come down to them in the likeness of men; and their devotion was so fervent, that they address themselves with great expedition to do them divine honours. The Apostle's only business was the same with that of the old Prophets; to show who was the true God, and to distinguish him from the pretended ones. And he does it by the same medium; by showing that he had all the powers of nature in his hand, and gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. Acts xiv. 17.

The other is the same Apostle's address to the great men at Athens. He could not charge them with atheism, but superstition. They worshipped the unknown God. All he had to do with them, was to declare unto them the God whom they ignorantly worshipped*. He does not appear to have been of *Junius's* mind, that their poets transmitted nothing to them but abominable lies of the fables and amours of their Gods; for he quotes two of them very much to his purpose: and having declared unto them the God who made heaven and earth, he presses them to repentance, by the awful argument of a future judgment: and recommends the knowledge of Jesus to them, whom God had appointed their Judge, and sealed his commission by raising him from the dead.

There remains only the same Apostle's discourse, in the first and second chapters of his epistle to the Romans.

* The Apostle, more modest than *Palamon*, allows the idolatrous Athenians to be worshipers of the true God, at the altar dedicated to him as unknown: whereas the vehement zeal of *Palamon* will not allow those, who differ from his express views of revelation in any article he is pleased to make material, to be worshippers of the true God.

Romans. The first is alledged to prove the natural knowledge of God ; and, in conjunction with two or three verses of the second, to prove what *Palæmon* calls the Law of Nature. His method of proof we shall take notice of afterward. Mean while, it will be proper to compare the Apostle's words with what we have been observing ; and which I think is the same, or very near the plan, which the gentlemen he handles so roughly seem to proceed upon. One needs no more than read the Apostle's words, to see how impossible it is for them to be in any strait to accommodate the same to their views ; or rather how impossible it is to do otherwise. The things of God are invisible ; for no man hath seen him at any time : But his eternal power and Deity are perceived by his works ; *νοούμενα*, being duly considered and reflected on. Thus God shews what is knowable of him ; and has shewn it in such a manner, and with such evidence, that men among whom this manifestation is made are absolutely without excuse. But whatever impressions the manifestation the Apostle speaks of may make upon the heart, conscience, or constitution, (or, if there is any other name for what receives the impression, or makes the perception of truth) ; it is by no means indelible : for, by the account he gives of it, it was so far lost, that they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness to that of corruptible man, and fowls and beasts and creeping things ; on which account they were given up of God to the lusts of their own hearts, and left to their vain imaginations. But, at the same time, he took such measures as effectually kept up the knowledge of sin, even among those who had not a law formally given them, as the Jews had ; that they were a sort of law to themselves ; or had the same impressions somewhat kept up on their minds and consciences, as the Jews had by their written law.

S E C T.

S E C T. VI.

Palæmon, Junius, and Lucius,* *their Notion of the Law of Nature, examined.*

BEFORE we proceed to the exceptions *Junius* has made against the above, it will be proper to consider his account of that Law of Nature which he is so very sanguine upon: and, by comparing both accounts with what the Apostle says, and the whole strain of the Sacred Oracles, -- one may be the better able to judge, which has the best foundation there; and particularly which of them best suit, not only with the words, but also the intention and design of the Apostle. *Junius* would fain persuade us, That his opponents are greatly distressed; and cannot subsist without offering great violence to the plain words of the text. I believe they will be content to stand a fair trial, whether he or they have shown the greatest evidences of this. When a disputant, instead of a fair state of his opponent's sentiments and his own, wherein they agree and wherein they differ, grossly belies his antagonists, and ascribes to them principles and opinions which they absolutely disclaim; and huddles up his own in loose general terms, and undefined, ambiguous or unmeaning words: the understanding Reader, without giving himself the trouble of looking farther, will either conclude him a notorious blunderer, or that he has some sinister design which he dare not avow.

How deeply guilty he is in the first of these, will appear to any one who will give himself the trouble of comparing what we have observed of their sentiments, with the charge begun in the title-page, and carried through the whole of *Palæmon's* performance, in

* Names assumed by the author of *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*; in that book, and in his *Law of Nature vindicated*.

in such a manner, that the Reader is never suffered to lose sight of it. He tells us, with great propriety, that his defence is designed against the men whom, in his sneering way, he calls "a learned class of moderns." And indeed, by his way of managing his subject, one would imagine, that the law of Nature is but a blind, masked battery, to play off his artillery with more advantage; and indeed he has not spared them. But as men have seldom all their wits about them in their anger, by his overdoing, he has shamefully exposed himself.

He tells us, that they think it needful, in order to support the credit of Revealed Religion against Deists, to deny the existence of that law. And honest *Lucius* concludes the whole with a round assertion, in his sly way, That they deny there is any such thing as either a Law of Nature or Conscience; and gravely gives his friend this very charitable reason for their "denial, " That nothing can serve more effectually, " to evade the force and blunt the edge of the conviction of sin, which we labour by any means " to avoid; and so whatever they let go, this must " be held fast, till they can find better." If this is the case, they may let it go when they will; for *Palæmon* has provided them with one, which will answer that purpose incomparably better, -- in his easy way of religion, which he has set up against the long and dreary one of the Popular Preachers. *Palæmon* had baited them sufficiently in his Six Epistles; and now *Junius* and *Lucius* are to serve the *Hutchinsonians* in the same sauce.

As I am an utter stranger to their secrets, though it appears very plainly that their spite is aimed at some particular persons; I cannot say who they are. But this I can say, that by all I have seen of of these men's writings, and particularly the two Gentlemen he calls *Deuteros* and *Tritos*, the imputation is grossly injurious; and the most proper answer would be, that of the good old Capuchin to a Jesuitical invective,

vective, not unlike our publisher's Letters; MEN-
TIRIS IMPUDENTISSIME. So far are they from de-
nying there is any law of nature, that they extend
it much further than *Junius* himself; they ex-
tend it as far as the Light of Nature can lead
any man to the knowledge of God and his Law.
And the light of Nature they extend as far as our
perceptive powers can reach, with all the assist-
ances one can have without a written law or sy-
stem of Revelation, that is, they extend it as far as
we can have information in a natural way, from
whatever original it takes its rise. And as Consci-
ence must reach just as far as one's knowledge does;
the means of conviction must be at least as strong as
any view of the Law of Nature can make them.

Junius's Law of Nature is confined to such things
as man might have known, though God had never
made any other Revelation of himself, than what is
extant in what they call the frame of Nature, the
visible Creation, and course of things therein. It is
acknowledged on all hands, that pardon, or the for-
giveness of sin by atonement and sacrifice, cannot be
known but by Revelation. This *Junius* will not al-
low to be any part of his Law of Nature. If he is
asked, why may it not? his answer must be, and it
is a good one, That whether God will at all pardon
sin, and what way he will do it, depends entirely on
his sovereign will and pleasure. But then, for the same
reason, we must be utterly at a loss about an after-
state; and whether death does not make a full end
of the man, as it does of other animals. Thus e-
ternity, and the world to come, must be entirely out
of the question; and man's happiness and misery,
hopes and fears, must all be terminated within the
compass of a present life: And there, it must be ac-
knowledged, the children of this world are greatly
wiser than the children of light. As long as Philo-
sophers trifle upon this plan, they keep within their
proper province: and when *Palæmon* and *Ju-*

mus confine themselves to this measure, let them pretend what they will, they are acting the Philosopher, and not the Divine; and must confine themselves to the fundamental law in philosophic speculation, namely, to assume nothing but what they can demonstratively prove; whatever falls short of this, is guessing, not reasoning. But their plan can by no means subsist there. It must have a God to give an authoritative sanction to their law; and, if they are consistent with themselves, nothing but the true God can answer their purpose. And as there is no true God, but the Great Creator, Preserver, and Sovereign of heaven and earth, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; they are driven upon the most dangerous dilemma, either to make out an impossible task, *viz.* to make out the perfect character of the Deity without any assistance from Revelation; or take up with an idol of their own imagination: and *Palémon* has told us truly, that this is as real idolatry as making images of him with our hands.

However palpably he has misrepresented his opponents, he has as effectually concealed his own sentiments; which he has, I do not say on what views, so huddled up, saying and unsaying, that he may safely defy all mankind to fix upon him any one thing he has asserted,---except that the Hutchinsonians are rather greater villains than the Popular Preachers. Tho' it is well known, there is not a more ambiguous word in language than *Nature* and *Natural*; he, industriously and openly, declines telling us,* in which of these many senses he understands and means to use it: because, forsooth, he is to proceed upon Scripture-grounds, he will not concern himself with any distinction which philosophers have made use of; that is to say, he will not treat his subject with any distinctness or precision, because philosophers profess to do so. Well; but if he will be so good as tell us in what sense these words are used in Scripture, it may

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* Defence, p. 9. et seqq.

do as well. Why? he tells us, it is the sense which the Apostle Paul uses them in. But the Apostle uses them in very different senses, as all other writers do; sometimes for the fabric and constitution of man, with all his essential properties; which is commonly called the nature of man, and distinguishes him from all other beings: --- sometimes for the state and condition men are born in, as children and descendants of Adam, in opposition to the change which the grace of God makes in those who are the objects of it: --- sometimes for the external privileges and relations men enter upon, by their being born in such a country, and of such or such parents. Thus we find him speaking of those who are Jews *by nature*. Once he calls that *natural* which was established by immemorial custom; and so *nature taught* that it was a shame for men to have long hair, in some places of the world: And but once for the use of the sexes, which the structure of each indicates. And another Apostle seems to speak very contemptuously of that last sort of natural knowledge; particularly, as if it was knowing only as brute beasts do.

However, *Junius* pitches upon this last as the foundation of his Law of Nature; which indeed the most stupid brute animals know as well as man, and corrupt themselves much less in the use of it. This he sets at the head of all relations; between parents and children; children of the same parents, &c. which demand suitable affections and behaviour. Demand! May one ask, by what authority? Nature, he will probably say. But what authority hath this same Nature to make such a demand? Why? he will say, We are so made, that such affections and passions naturally arise upon these relations; that is, I presume, they necessarily flow from that frame and constitution the Creator has given us, like hunger and thirst; the love of life, and the favourite enjoyments of it, with their necessary consequences and effects; eagerly grasping at, and attempting to in-

gross all we can lay our hands on, -- which is likely to gratify any of our senses, affections and passions. I believe none of his antagonists will deny, that those he mentions are natural: and he needed not have adduced Scripture to prove them such. But then they will think themselves well supported in saying, That these same natural appetites, cravings, affections and passions, are the true spring of all the disorder and corruption that is, or ever was in the world; and particularly these which the Apostle mentions, and puts a mark of infamy upon. They may therefore be justly accounted the rise or occasion of, or what gave necessity for laws restraining and regulating them, which may be properly enough called *natural*: not because nature dictated them; or prompts men to practise them; but because the measures directed there are absolutely necessary to the perfection, happiness and well-being of mankind. Laws which none could dictate but he who perfectly understands the human constitution, the purpose man is designed to answer, and where his true interest and happiness lies.

But, - says *Junius*, The Scripture every where appeals to the human breast, for fixing the Law of Natural Affection. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, &c.*" Unhappily for his argument it is added, *Yea she may forget.* And as that is the most tender and endearing relation, it is not to be imagined that the rest are more unchangeable. As *Junius* seems to build much, and often triumphs most unmercifully, on the common practice of appealing to the human breast, - and what is called *improper, undecent, shocking*, with other such terms of reproach; it may be necessary for some readers, to bring it to a fair trial how far it will go. As this, if it have any propriety, is bringing mankind to a poll, where, in many cases of the greatest moment, the votes will be divided; shall the majority determine what is natural? In the most polite nations ever were, the *Greeks and Romans*,

mans, two of the most capital vices were so far from being shocking, that they were practised and approved by those who were reckoned the wisest and most virtuous among them. And to this day, experience assures us, that the fear of shame will totally extinguish the most tender and original of all the social affections. The case is this: Every body judges and acts upon the present prevailing sentiments: Were these adjusted and fixed by any certain standard, the Moral Sense, which I take either to be the same with sentiment, or a mere *chimæra*, might be a good rule. But sentiment we certainly know, is not natural; it is acquired, --- and formed much oftener upon authority and example, prevalent and inveterate customs, and even prejudices and passions, than the invariable truth of things. Hence the immense odds between the sentiments of a savage or a wild man, and one carefully instructed and inured to all the measures of a humane and polite behaviour. And I am greatly mistaken, if many of *Palæmon's* and *Junius's* sallies, which in their account should pass for brilliant wit and satyr, do not appear scurrilous and shocking to men of more humane and refined sentiments!

There is one general law which *Junius* assures us will hold good round the globe, *viz.* "that we should do to men, as we think they ought to do to us." But one thing we are sure of from experience, that this Law is far from being indelible; as there is no one thing less minded by the generality of mankind. He says it carries demonstration in it. It may be so; but demonstration itself, tho' it may recommend a truth to the understanding, affects not the heart nor conscience. It is however far from being a self evident proposition; nor are either the grounds on which it stands, nor the true import and meaning of it, so easily apprehended, as *Junius* would persuade us. It cannot stand but on the supposition that all men are equal, and extends to the forgiveness of the highest injuries and wrongs; which I suppose *Junius* will find no pro-

per foundation for, but only upon that discovery of forgiveness with God, where he who gave the rule founded it: The expectation of which all men have embraced, and appeared solicitous to obtain it, by various rites and acts of devotion of their own invention, corrupting the revealed shadows of that truth which he will probably call a supernatural state. Therefore, the *Guilt* which he inserts, must have the sanction of a higher authority, ere it can hold in any part of the globe at all

In the conclusion of his Last Epistle, (and by its situation there, it should be the result of the whole, and his last and best advised determination,) we are told, that he was content to take what he calls *Cicero's* noted account of the law of nature; "as giving the common sense of the cool observers of nature, both in his own and former times, while he defines it thus: *Ad quam non docti, sed nati, non instituti, sed imbuti sumus;*" which he gives us the sense of in English,—“The law which we receive, not from instruction, but from birth, not from education, but from instinct.” Thus every man must be born with a Law in his belly; which, with all the midwifery of tutors and instructors, cannot be brought forth, until he has gone with it for at least more years than his mother did months with him. But he should have minded a question *Protes* had put: If we are thus born with this law, why such pains and labour about teaching it? But our wise Author did not see fit to answer it; as he has a singular dexterity at slipping over what he finds too hot for his handling. Instead of that, he triumphs unmercifully in the testimony of two, whom he calls atheistical writers; and concludes, “Blush now if you can.” Their testimony is indeed home, and according to *Junius's* own heart: But why blush? To find men who, if he believes them not, have no God but Nature, nor any religion but Morality, extolling that imaginary authority. Their rant is never a bit better than *Cicero's*: and when brought to the test of
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common sense, observation and experience, will be found to be no better than the unmeaning cant of visionary Enthusiasts; and calculate to raise and maintain such a measure of pride and self-esteem, as may supply in some measure the want of proper principles, to found their virtue and morality on.

I know not whether the proposition he gives us in his title-page, under the title, *an axiom*, is designed to support this whimsical notion; but thus it stands, "The spirit of man is of a nobler Make than the spirit of a beast; the former being so made as naturally to receive from surrounding objects, and the course of things, impressions of a higher order than the latter are capable of." I must honestly acknowledge, that I am by no means a competent judge of the first part of the proposition. The Make of bodies I have some notion of, and by it can distinguish some of them from others; but the Make of spirits I am utterly unacquainted with, and have no way of knowing so much as their Being, but as they discover themselves by their operations and effects. As *Junius* pretends to an intuitive knowledge of things, he may perhaps have seen and compared them. By his illustration it would seem, it was designed against some body who had asserted the preference, or at least the equality of the spirits of beasts to those of men: and as it is stated, such an opponent might have a pretty fair chance. Both it seems are so much upon a level, that their common excellency lies in receiving impressions from surrounding objects; and that, we are sure, must be done by the organs of sense. If the organs are equal, the impressions on the spirits of both will be also equal. If there is any difference, occasioned by the greater perfection or deficiency of these organs, it will not prove the spirits to be either of a more noble or ignoble Make.

But, says *Junius*, the spirit of man is so made, as to receive impressions of a higher order. What he means

means by his *higher order*, I know not ; unless it is a cant-word which he has licked up from some of our modern mystic philosophers, who have taken it into their heads thus to class external objects. But be the impressions of what order they will, they are still but sensible ones ; and when they are considered as they are in themselves, without the mind's working upon them, will be found precisely of the same kind. And if it is by these impressions that the law of nature is conveyed to the man ; let them be of what order they will, it must be a quite different thing from Instinct ; which takes its rise from the constitution itself, and is not dependent on external objects or impressions. What they call the higher orders, Beauty and Order in the works of nature or art, Moral Beauty or Deformity, depend entirely on taste and sentiment ; which, in such imperfect and low beings as the best of us are, must be subject to continual variations and changes ; as new lights present them in very different views. But as instincts are natural, unvariable, and always prompting to the same course ; instinct must be something that is to be found in every individual of the same species, and distinguishes them from all other kinds.

Such a peculiar instinct, *Junius* tells us, there is in man, which he calls *Conscience* : and this, *Palamon* assures us, is the only thing which distinguish him from the beasts that perish ; which, if we may believe him, can reason as well as he. It is true, that all human perceptions, or (if you please to call them,) the impressions made on the human frame, be they of a higher or lower order, are attended with a consciousness of the cause and occasion of them ; the effect they have on the constitution, and how they are entertained and resented by the mind or spirit which is in every man : and it is likewise true, that this consciousness is the first thing that distinguishes a man from a brute. But it might easily be shown, that it is very far from being the only thing. This same consciousness is really the
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parent of what we call Conscience; which naturally and necessarily rises out of it, and which can extend no further than that does. Until we are conscious of some perceptions or information, we can have no Conscience at all; nor can it act with any authority, until we are conscious of a rule established by the great Sovereign of heaven and earth.

But *Palæmon* tells us strange things about it, which *Junius* and *Lucius* reckon upon as so sacred, "That whosoever does not swallow them without hesitation, is declared to have no conscience at all, viz. That it is by this that man corresponds with his Maker; that it is what we know without reasoning, and its dictates indelible; that its simple dictates are the only fund of right reasoning, and the original standard, measures or reasons for the conduct of men; the fair use of them, or the just application of them to particular cases in word or action, is right reasoning, or acting a reasonable part; and *e contra*. These are impressed on our hearts by him who made us; not invented by men; and the proper use of our reasoning faculty is to use them right. The Apostles addressed neither the reason nor passions of men, but their consciences; and clear up the half-defaced reasons of duty, naturally implanted in his heart. But as none would chuse to make himself miserable, they have found it convenient to have recourse to another fund of reasoning than the natural conscience, and to invent other notions than the natural ones. When the truth comes, it confirms strongly all the notices of God, and all the reasons of duty naturally implanted in his conscience, and adds what was the one thing needful, a divine reason of hope*."

Would not any man, who understands the meaning of words, conclude, That Conscience; in his view of it, is a set of principles and reasons of action impressed indelibly on the heart of man by his Creator; and so compleat

* Letters on Theron and Aspasio, p. 170. 171. — 174. 210, &c

compleat, that there needs no more to furnish out a perfect knowledge of God and his law ; that Revelation neither does, nor can make any addition to it ; except the bare atonement for the comfort of sinners? yet *Junius* peremptorily denies, that there was ever any such account of conscience heard of among them ; “ We never maintained, that any man had a conscience, or any natural knowledge of God and his law, exclusive of the view of his works†”. This puts the whole upon quite another footing. Instincts, and indelible impressions of truth and duty, are all of a sudden transformed into acquired knowledge ; and acquired by the proper means, viz. The discoveries God has made of himself in his works and ways with men. Accordingly he “ † apprehends it would be departing “ from the point in hand, to inquire, what impressions “ of duty mankind would have had, if they had been “ otherwise framed and situated than they are, that “ is, if they had not been made male and female, parents and children, brethren, &c.—but every individual produced and supported in a separate Island “ by himself.

It would be a very idle business indeed, to inquire what impressions there would have been of duty, if men had been otherwise made ; that is, if they were not men. But *situation* is another thing ; and it is hard to say how the difference should be made by it, (suppose between a man in society, and one out of it), in what is essential to the species, and the only thing which distinguishes him from a beast.

One might have hoped, by this turn, that he was about returning into the road of common sense ; and especially, when we find him acquiescing so cordially in Mr *Locke's* paraphrase on the text in question. I need not observe, what is so well known,—that Mr *Locke* would not allow either any innate ideas or principles, either speculative or practical: That paraphrase
founds

† Defence, p. 32.

‡ Ibid, p. 10.

founds the whole of our knowledge of God, as all our Natural Theologians do, on the contemplation and reasoning on his works. But all of a sudden, he takes such a flight as few will be able to follow him in, and which Mr *Locke* would have declared the *ne plus ultra* of nonsense. I cannot expect to be trusted on any less authority than his own words. After having told us that they never maintained that any man had a conscience, &c. exclusive of the divine works; he goes on, "And yet we say, such knowledge is obtained without philosophy, without reasoning about effects and causes." And so far I should readily agree with him: as we really have it in a far more easy and natural way, namely, by the testimony and information originally given by God himself; and handed down to us by the ordinary conveyance of history and tradition. But he goes on, "The visible works of God and the mind of man are so framed and adapted to one another, that the former urge upon the latter that they are effects, or *ποιήματα*, made things. And my very knowing them to be effects, includes in it the conviction that they have a cause; even as my seeing objects includes in it a conviction that the light is present. We are convinced the things we see are effects, not by any chain of reasoning, but by intuition: and intuition is acknowledged to afford a higher degree of conviction than any chain of reasoning: so that there is no occasion here for reasoning from effect to cause; conviction on in this case anticipates all reasoning." And after some remarks on the weakness and imperfection of reasoning on this subject, he tries to shelter himself under the wings of an eminent philosopher; who, I dare say, will give him small thanks for bringing him in to such company.

It has hitherto been believed, that to see things by intuition--was the prerogative of him who is perfect in understanding: and that such low beings, as the wisest

wisest of us are, can perceive nothing at all but by certain mediums suited to our perceptive powers; excepting only the operations of our own mind, which we are immediately conscious of: And those who understand themselves, I am well satisfied, will be of the same mind still.

But allowing that some things, which lie so plainly before us as to carry a demonstration in the very terms, (such as these we call self-evident propositions), may be in a law sense said to be intuitively certain; yet these which express the truth of the Divine Being, and his incomprehensible perfections, are not so much as pretended to be of that kind; but need some intermediate ones to set the meaning of the terms in such a light, as that we can perceive the connection. This is what we call *Demonstration*; and the very name denotes its intention, namely, to point out, and to bring under our perception, the truth we want to have ascertained. If every intermediate proposition is not thus intuitively certain, and perceived as such, the whole loses its effect: And if the several views are not closely connected one with another, as so many steps to bring the object nearer, or as so many different standings where it may be seen to greater advantage, it answers no purpose at all; the whole is mere trifling and folly; because every view one takes of an object, if it has any effect, is really a proposition formed in the mind. When *Junius*, and the Philosopher he pretends to copy, have made the best of their intuitions; they must either make out a perfect demonstration, or carry no conviction at all to the Mind, or Conscience, if they please to call it so, of the observer.

I believe hardly any body will be so sceptical, as to refuse that every effect must have a cause; nor even that every thing which has a beginning, and once was not, or was not what it is now,---owes its Being, and the change it has undergone, to Something, whatever it is, that at that time had powers sufficient

ent for producing such an effect. I say, at that time; because a single act exerted, will by no means warrant us to conclude, That the agent continues still possessed of the same ability. However strong the presumption may be, it is but a presumption, and no more. But when we are to judge of any thing, for instance, this universe as it now stands; we can by no means determine whether it is an effect, a thing made, unless we first know it was once nothing. *Junius's* assertion, "of its urging upon the mind that it is a made thing", must go for nothing, unless he can show us where its urging force lies. Many have attempted to demonstrate, That this same universe, and even the matter of which it consists, could not have been from eternity; and have indeed said many plausible things. But, besides—that these pretended demonstrations are immensely above the pitch of common capacities, and can never found a conviction strong enough to answer the purposes of that great truth which they are designed to support; *Junius*, and his philosopher, have found them altogether inconclusive; and that this demonstration founders in the very first step, viz. The connection between cause and effect.---Conviction without a reason for believing, is really conviction without evidence; and, by the name he gives it, of *Intuition*, it may stand a competition even with *Jacob Behmen* himself for enthusiasm and absurdity.

The truth that *Junius* is groping after, I observed before, is a very plain and obvious one; but by no means answers his purpose. Reason can discover no facts: his Philosopher has told him, that its province lies quite another way, namely, to make the proper improvement of what we know. There is no way of getting at the knowledge of what cannot be brought within the reach of our perceptive powers, but by information and testimony; and according to the credit of the Informer, the evidence is weak or strong: and Conviction thereby does indeed anticipate all reasoning;

ning; tho' Believing, in this case, is the most reasonable thing in the world.

His instance "of light and the objects seen by it," by which he pretends to illustrate his assertion, is nothing to the purpose. Light is as much an object of sight, as any part of visible matter: But had there never been any darkness, I believe all his intuitive powers would not have enabled him to distinguish between the object, and the light by which it is seen; and Visibility would have been reckoned as essential a property of matter, as Extension itself.

But should we even be so extravagantly liberal as to allow him his intuitions; and that, by a direct and immediate perception, he is convinced this universe is an effect, and had a cause: If he has no further assistance from some other medium, one may say, very positively,---that he would be as much, at least, in the dark, as our most sagacious Philosophers are about the causes of natural *Phænomena*, which they certainly know are effects; and his intuitive knowledge of the Deity would be very much like what *Palemon* calls the faith of the Popular Peachers,---"a wish, or a guess, any thing, every thing, or no thing." Yet the vain creature *Junius* is out of all patience at the Gentleman he calls *Deuteros*, for saying That the invisible things of God could not be known by the mere inspection of the creature, and hinting that the Apostle says so. It is not worth while to take any notice of his enormous passion on this head; for if the thing is true, it can be no injury to the Apostle to suppose he said so. And indeed he says what is equivalent: For it is not by a bare inspection of the Works of God, that he says his eternal power and God-head are seen or perceived; but by their being *νεμεται*, a word which is well known to signify the most vigorous exercise of all the powers of the mind.—Moses, † or rather He who taught Moses, appears

† Deut. iv. 19.

pears to have had quite other apprehensions of the effects which a bare inspection of the works of nature were likely to produce, viz. That when one lifts up his eyes to heaven, and sees the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, all the host of heaven, He is in the utmost danger of being enticed to worship them and serve them. This is no groundless surmise: the event justified the propriety of the caution; and, in spight of all the manifestations God had made of his eternal power, by which he had demonstrated himself the only true God; this was the effect which the inspection of the heavens had upon the Jewish nation, down to the Babylonish captivity; which put a full period to that piece of folly.

Let us now, before we proceed any further, lay these different accounts of that law which *Junius* proposes the defence of, together; and try what can be made of it. "It is the Law which we are not taught, but born with; which we have not by instruction, but instinct. No: It is what we learn by the impressions we receive from surrounding objects, and the course of things", (the same I suppose which we use to call Observation and Experience). "No; It is what we acquire by seriously considering and reasoning upon the visible Works of God, in Mr *Locke's* way: it is the result of our natural appetites, affections and passions. Not these either: It is Conscience, or what we know without reasoning, viz. That set of principles indelibly impressed on the heart of man, which is the only fund of just reasoning: it is what arises on the bare inspection of the visible works of creation, by direct intuition, without either reasoning or reflection."

If any body can make intelligible or consistent sense out of this odd jumble, he must be master of much penetration. And yet *Junius* and *Lucius* have the assurance to tell us; that they hold nothing, "but what has been held by the reputed orthodox, by
" eminent

“ eminent philosophers, and by the vulgar :” *Lucius* censures his friend very severely, for presuming to entertain any suspicion of its being otherwise: And if any body ventures to deny any part of it, he must, so far as their credit will go, stand convicted of denying there is any such thing as Conscience or natural knowledge. But men of plain understanding will easily perceive the bare-faced falshood of the charge; and that the difference is quite of another nature, viz. What that Light of Nature is by which the knowledge of God and his law is, or may be attained, by those who have not the benefit of a written Revelation? *Junius* and *Palæmon* make it, no body can tell what. They, on the other hand, call all these means *natural*, which the human frame and constitution can find or admit of, in that state and these circumstances men are found in: such as, Observation and Experience; Reasoning upon these; and what information and instruction can be had in the natural conveyance of discourse, writing, history and tradition, or if there is any other natural way of attaining the knowledge of what we had never seen; whether the original discovery was from Revelation, or any other way. It is just as natural for man to believe facts which none but God could reveal, and tradition is just as natural a conveyance of them,---as any thing we never saw or observed. Yea, it is just as natural for man to receive information and instruction implicitly in many cases, as it is to admit into and retain in the mind what enters by the senses.

S E C T. VII.

*A particular examination of the arguments used by
Junius, &c.*

AND now, to borrow another word or two from *Junius*, “ I might here rest the matter, and
with

with a good grace save myself (and readers) any further trouble;" as every one will be able with great ease, and without my assistance, to form a proper judgment both of the truth and importance of what he has advanced in defence of that, no body knows what, *Something*, he calls the law of nature. But as that author appears to have vanity enough to conclude, and even to boast of every thing, however trifling, as unanswerable, which is not particularly noticed; I shall consider every thing that has the least appearance of strength in his arguments

Though he professes to confine his defence to express Scripture-authority, and to rest the whole upon the Apostle's discourse to the Romans; yet he has, like a skilful disputant, taken care to omit nothing that might annoy or expose his adversary, as well as what should defend himself. He has accordingly intrenched himself in a sort of outworks, which, though they have no real strength, yet make something of a shew, and may amuse where they answer no other purpose. If one can but raise and rivet prejudices, either against men, or their opinions, no matter which; so much is gained on the defender's side.

And here, in the first place, we find him pleading a sort of prescription upon an immemorial possession; which no body has any right to disturb. All the reputed orthodox, all the most eminent philosophers, and the vulgar without exception; all the world have held as he does, until some upstart moderns have foolishly taken it into their heads to contradict the common sense of mankind.

By what we have already observed, it does not appear that ever there was so much as one man in the world found espousing his sense of Conscience and the Light of Nature. But tho' every title of his allegation was true, error is none of these things which can acquire any of the rights of truth by any length of time: And whenever a mistake comes to be discover-

ed, every man stands bound to throw it off. The question in all these cases is not,—How long the thing has been believed, or who have asserted it? but, What evidence is there of its being true?

But, says *Junius*, no body has any right to impugn an established opinion, unless it is contrary to some part of Scripture. We shall have occasion to say something on this head afterward. At present I only put a case: That *Junius*, or any body else, should be so bold as to impose a whim of his own, as the sense of some text of Scripture and the mind of the Spirit of God; while, at the same time, common sense, and all the observation and experience in the world, declare it false and absurd; may not one attempt, without breach of duty, say is not every man who can do it bound, to rescue the Sacred Word of God from such unworthy abuse?

The denial of his law of nature, he says, is pretended to be necessary for supporting revealed Religion against the Deists; whereas it is so far from being of any advantage, that, in his view, it puts an effectual stop to all reasonings with them.*—He adds, “I see nothing left me to do, but to desire them, on the credit of my experience, to be so obliging, as to divest themselves of all the notions they call natural, and wait till I read them a set of new ones out of my favourite book.” Favourite book! was ever a more contemptuous epithet given the Oracles of God, by any the loosest Freethinker. But to the argument:

I do not find, that it ever has been so much as hinted, that the Christian Revelation could not be defended against all the attacks of Deists, without meddling at all with the Law of Nature on one side or other. The truth of any doctrine is one thing, and the use and tendency another; which ought never to enter an argument. But when we know certainly, that what is called the natural knowledge of God and his

* Defence, p. 7.

his law is boldly set up, with a declared intention to supersede the necessity, and consequently the reality of any Revelation whatsoever; and especially when such a man as *Pakemon* gives them his friendly aid, by adorning it with perfect assurance of eternal life; it becomes a very necessary duty, to pull off that only veil they have to hide their real atheism. What *Junius's* views are, he best knows; but he must be very short sighted, if he really thinks Divine truth cannot support itself, without such a rotten foundation.—I have indeed heard such blind assertions; and they have been made with such airs of assurance, by pretended defenders of Revelation too, that many honest men have believed, that natural religion is the only foundation on which Revelation can stand: for how, say they, shall we believe any thing is a Revelation from God,—unless we are previously satisfied that there is a God, and that his testimony is to be believed? I only observe, that the men who are so sanguine on this design, to found all Divine faith on human reasoning,—and whosoever believe it, and go this way to work with Divine Revelation,—must be driven, whether they will or not, to land it ultimately there.

What *Junius* objects, That there is no ground left for any reasonings with the Deists, argues either great ignorance, or great perverseness. Great ignorance, both of the Scriptures and of human nature; if he cannot perceive, that the way God has taken there for instructing mankind, and manifesting himself in all the glory of his eternal power and Deity, by plain substantial facts obvious to every capacity, is not infinitely more natural, *i. e.* better suited to the human constitution and way of perceiving and attaining such knowledge,—than any that *Junius*, or his philosophers, have to substitute in its room. And great perverseness; if he knows it, and talks in such a contemptuous manner as he does of it. Does he believe, that this is the way which Divine wisdom has chosen to manifest himself by; and which has succeeded, when the world

world by wisdom *knew not God*? And dare he set up in competition with it, such a pitiful trifling thing as his Law of Nature is, even supposing there was such a thing? What shall we say of men, who dare set up their imaginations and whims for such a horrid purpose!

But *Junius* goes yet higher; that there can not only be no reasoning against Deists, but no reasoning at all, if his Law of Nature is not allowed; nay, it seems to be a thing of such a whimsical nature, that nothing can be said in defence of it, unless it is allowed as an undoubted first principle. Much ado there has been about first principles: Every man was for honouring such as answered his purpose with that name; and if these were not granted, the dispute was at an end. *Junius* is certainly in the right to insist upon it; and if he had left it there, his cause would have stood just as fair as it does, after all the pains he has taken about it. But when he says the Law of Nature is the last resort, he should have remembered the appeal is made to men's understandings and perceptive powers, and the convictions arising upon the evidence laid before them; and until such evidence is produced, the appeal signifies nothing, and can have no more effect than his attempt to persuade men, that they see intuitively all the wonders of the spiritual world, while they are conscious to themselves they see nothing at all.

Yet those who deny his indelible impressions, and intuitive knowledge of God and his law, must be wrong; for the opposition took its rise from high church, and is calculate for its service. This is very strange! And I dare say, neither the one nor the other can be perceived, unless it is by his intuitive powers. Why? The thing is plain: *Hutchinson* was the contriver of the opposition, and he was a high church-man, and a man of persecuting principles; he was moreover a great pretender to skill in the Hebrew language, and
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attempted to correct our vulgar translation in many places ; and so to reconcile the Scriptures to what is called true Philosophy, that we should no more need the long approved apology, That the Scripture was not designed to teach men philosophy, or to speak as things really were, but as they appeared to the vulgar. And if our natural notions and vulgar translation are once set aside, we shall be rather in worse circumstances than those who are under the most rampant Popery. And he himself has observed very bad consequences of this same Hebrew: " It serves to " awaken envy in the unlearned ; and to lead the " wise man and the critic to glory in his wisdom *". It is very probable, that those who make it their business to learn the mind of God from his own word, will not submit so implicitly to his or his friend's dictates.

I can assure the Letter-writers, that I have no more connection with Mr *Hutchinson* than they. No doubt he had faults. But the greatest I could ever observe in his way of writing, was a redundance of that haughty and abusive spirit which they imitate in their writings. He had likewise his mistakes, and several whims and *nostrums* of his own ; which he was extremely fond of, and held very tenaciously, as they appear to do theirs. But tho' he had been a devil, instead of a heretic, what is that to the Law of Nature ? Must we not believe that Jesus was the holy One of God, or that the Apostles were his servants, because the Devil asserted both the one and the other ? The truth or falsehood of any doctrine does by no means depend on the piety or wickedness of those who teach it : And *Palamon*, when it served his turn, could laugh very heartily at that preposterous way of judging. But when one compares that astonishing rage which the very shadow of a *Hutchinsonian*, or Popular Preacher, throws him into, — with that calmness which he shews to the Deists ; what shall one think ?

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* P. 4. et *passim*.

Can it be zeal for God; and that grace which Paul preached †; “and in defence of which he spent his “strength and spirits, and at last poured out his “life?” Can such a sweet fountain as the fervour of love to God and man, send forth such bitter streams? At any rate, are not the Deists as haughty enemies to that grace which Paul preached? There is indeed this difference, which seems to be a very great one in his eyes; The Deists are very orthodox on the grand point. They are as tenacious and vehement asserters of the Law of Nature as *Junius* himself; and appeal as boldly and blindly to the human breast, for Conviction without Evidence.

The great cry he raises against Mr *Hutchinson*, and the Gentleman he calls *Protos*, for abetting persecuting principles, puts me in mind of the view *Palæmon* every now and then gives us of his pure Apostolical party; as he would fain persuade us that they are hated and persecuted by all the world; which, by some expressions our Lord used to his Disciples, he makes a mark of a true church. I can easily believe that it is a sure mark of a false church, to persecute: but I have the authority of an inspired Historian * to say, That a true church may have rest, and be rather more edified than when they were under persecution. And however that is, the equity and lenity of our civil Government has left us no instruments to persecute one another with but tongues and pens. Whenever he can produce such an instance of such persecution against him and his friends, as *Palæmon* and *Junius* have raised, I may say, against all mankind, except Deists, Freethinkers, and old grey headed sinners, he may have something to say; but, until that is done, the mark of a true church, if it is one, lies on the other side.

However,

† P. 66.

* Acts ix. 31.

However, I can assure him, his notion of the Law of Nature, and particularly the innate knowledge of God and his law, was denied before High-Church was heard of. His friend *Lucius* can tell him *Socinus* denied it: and *Socinus* did not err in every thing. And though the mistaken zeal of many good men has branded this, in their systems, as a Socinian tenet; no body, who thinks at all, will sustain that as an argument of its being false. Nor was Mr *Locke* the only man who denied both innate ideas and principles, without which innate knowledge cannot subsist. I know one, who I am sure, is no Socinian; who was, upon very solid grounds, assured of the vanity of these pretensions, and the impossibility of attaining the knowledge of the true God without Divine revelation, before any of his Hutchinsonians were heard of; and what he will perhaps hardly believe, it was that very text which he builds so much upon, *God hath shewed it unto them*, which led him to consider the various ways by which God has shewed his invisible being and perfections to mankind; which he has tully and satisfyingly done, without leaving them to visionary and delusive imaginations, or the fruitless labour of squeezing the knowledge of Divine and spiritual things out of the visible works of Nature: a practice that has given rise to all the idolatry ever was in the world.

But *Junius* has another very strong reason for holding his Law of Nature, with the utmost tenaciousness and vehemency, against all opposers; and he closes his first Letter with it, as quite decisive. Otherwise, "He would be obliged to alter greatly his notions of the Divine law,--of the righteousness which honoured it,--of Paul's reasonings what is of the law and of faith,--of the character of a Christian, &c." In a word, his foundation is destroyed, and there is neither sense nor consistency left in his system; which he and *Pakemon* have laboured with all their might to impose
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on the world, as the only pure Apostolical Christianity. I observed before, on *Palamou's* Letters, that the whole rests on this rotten pillar. But when we consider what these notions are :---a law given by the infinitely wise and unchangeable God, with promises of eternal life annexed to it ; and assured by the oath of God ; altogether distinct from, and opposite in its terms to the Gospel of Christ and constitution of grace : a law, which any attempt to observe in that view, would be direct rebellion against the Author of that constitution : a law, given with no other intention but to bring poor creatures under eternal misery for not fulfilling it : a righteousness of so strange a nature, that if we have any concern about obtaining it, we shall certainly lose it : a Gospel and constitution of grace consisting singly in an atonement for sin, and which shall do the business effectually without any interposal of Divine power ; a new creature of one's own making, with more of the same kind. When these, and such other notions of his, are duly considered ; every one who understands any thing of the true Gospel of Christ will readily conclude, that there was great need for altering them greatly ; and the sooner the better, both for himself and those he has to do with.

Nay ; but, says *Junius*, if the Law of Nature be rejected *, “ We can see no coherence in the grand
 “ scheme of the Scriptures, we can have no
 “ distinct or satisfactory notion of the Divine grace
 “ revealed there, no just view either of sin or righteousness ; yea, the necessity of Revelation disappears, and moreover a high road is paved for downright Atheism.” Boldly said ! but rather too much upon the marvellous. Should I assert just the reverse,---that all these consequences would follow, if his notion of the Law of Nature, and the superstructure he builds upon it, was granted ; and moreover a
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strong temptation he laid in the way of mankind to indulge themselves in the most licentious wickedness, and utter neglect of God and his Christ, to the very moment of death; I am much mistaken, if I have not greatly a better foundation than he has for his rhodomantadoes; which all land in this, That there must be a Law aside from the Gospel, as he expresses it, that is, as I suppose, entirely different and detached from the constitution of grace, in order to convict and condemn the sinner in the great judgment; and without which he could not so much as be found a sinner, far less condemned, by a righteous Judge: Nay, he could have no need of mercy; because there was no law to condemn him; and therefore the denial of such a law cannot proceed but upon sentiments dishonourable to the Divine justice and mercy. *Palæmon's* cant, which he repeats on every occasion, is indeed all that he hath to say.

It is the great unhappiness of such short-sighted creatures as men are in their best estate, to be at the same time possessed of a great deal of vanity; and yet more, that the greatest share of vanity should be found with those who know least. Nothing but a vile composition of ignorance and vanity could ever have tempted any of mankind to chalk out the measures of the Divine procedure, by their own silly apprehensions of what we call *justice* and *mercy*. The ground of all this confidence appears to be this, That he has no notion at all of any constitution of grace, the measure at once of man's duty and the Divine judgment; but only of a law requiring perfect personal obedience, as the only way in which man can live, dispensed with by sovereign authority, in what he calls the Gospel, which he confines to one single article of pardon by the atonement made in the blood of the Redeemer; which, he says in plain terms, is all that man needed in the worst state he could be in. And because the Gospel in this view can neither con-

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vict nor condemn any man, there must be such a law as he pleads for. But as we have shewn - there is no such law to be found in the Bible, and that the Constitution of grace was the original law of creation, and the only true law of nature ; all mankind stand convicted of having forsaken that only way by which they can live ; or, in the Prophet's words, *They have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water :* and they can have no expectation of any thing but perishing, unless they are raised to a new and incomparably better life in Jesus Christ.

Julius himself seems more than half-convinced, that the original Revelation, made to mankind in Adam and Noah, might have answered all purposes, had it been sufficiently promulgated and notified ; but as there was no conveyance but by tradition, and that came down greatly corrupted, it must be the same to after-ages as if it had never been made. " For he " cannot see how the Gentiles in Paul's time could " be convinced of sin, for forgetting what was said to " Adam and Noah, if it was never fairly told them ; " but, instead thereof, a parcel of most absurd lies." -- " For how should a proper criterion be found, to distinguish authentic Revelation, &c ? " -- " If Revelation was thus effaced, how could the Apostle say, " *They were inexcusable* ; when, on this supposition, " they plainly appear to be furnished with a very " obvious and weighty excuse ? " Vehemently urged, it must be confessed ! but he seems to have forgot, that the world subsisted more than a third part of its whole duration to this day, without any such authentic conveyance as he insists on ; and had they a good excuse for neglecting the Revelation given their fathers ? or was it purely for their transgressing the Law of Nature, that the whole inhabitants of the earth, except eight persons, were swept off at once ? Was God bound to provide an authentic conveyance, either to the whole or any one nation, as he did to Israel ?

rael? *Junius* sure will not say he was. Had that Revelation never been put into writing, what case would mankind have been in; should they have had notions of the invisible things of God, but what they knew without either Revelation or reasoning? The least inconvenience that could follow, was certain destruction to them all by the law they were under; for they could have no knowledge of the atonement, and consequently no hope. Dare he say the men that called on the name of the Lord before the deluge, either perished eternally, or were saved by his Law of Nature? and what shall we say of those who lived for the space of eight hundred years after, before the law was given; most of whom had nothing but Tradition?---He would be a rash bold man, who would say either one or other.

Junius and *Palæmon*, though they dare not say it in words, yet seem very plainly to suppose it; unless, as they are very successful in expedients, they can find some difference or other between Tradition in these periods, and those which followed the putting of Revelation into Writing. But, not to stand on such trifling; I need only ask, Whether the putting the same truths which are handed down by Tradition into writing, gives them any pre-eminence or virtue which they had not before? No body will be so absurd as to say it does. It is the Truth, not the manner of conveyance, which is the power of God unto salvation. However uncertain then and unauthentic Tradition may be, that demonstration of the Spirit and power which gives the saving belief of the truth---can as easily and effectually make it by Tradition as Writing. Was our faith to stand in the wisdom of man, and to rest on the sort of evidence which that builds upon; the difference would indeed be very great. But however *Palæmon* appears very positive, that there is no grace shewn, to be bestowed on mankind, but the bare atonement; yet I hope

Junius, upon second thoughts, will allow that faith is the gift of God. And as I have already shewn, by the best authority, that our gracious Creator has so ordered the circumstances of mankind, that they not only might, but that many actually did come to the knowledge of the same truth by which Jews and Christians have eternal life : it would be nauseous trifling to insist farther upon it.

S E C T. VIII.

*What is called the Law of Nature in Scripture.
Several Queries about it, answered.*

THE above observation absolutely destroys the force of *Junius's* grand argument, viz. that it is impossible to make sense of the Apostle's words in the connection he has put them in, but by allowing his natural knowledge of God and his law written in the hearts of men ; and also removes the great distress he would persuade us his antagonists are in, to clear their hands of it : as we find him boasting in the conclusion of his last Letter, thus ; ' Yea, " from what I have seen, I have reason to be more " and more confident, that this passage of Paul will " remain, firm as a rock, to repel the assaults of every *Hutchinsonian* who shall be so rash as to push his " head against it." I am well satisfied it will ; - and of every *Palamon*, *Junius*, and *Lucius* too, --- who shall presume to impose their whims on the Sacred Oracles of God, in opposition to all the reason and experience in the world.

Let the Apostle's design be as *Junius* lays it, To show that all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, are under sin, nay dead in trespasses and sins ; that they are all inexcusable, and that no flesh can be justified before God by any law or doings whatsoever ; that all have so much light, whether they have a written law or
not,

not, as that their own consciences must condemn them: these are all plain facts, which no body can get denied who reflects at all on what he knows. The case is plain, with respect to those who live where Christianity is professed: and yet how few even of them have gathered their knowledge from the Record? Their belief, as well as their religious worship, and their conduct towards one another, stand for the most part on the same bottom---as among others who had no written Revelation at all. *Junius* laughs at Mr *Romain's* founding upon the old proverb, *Custom is a second nature*. But the numerous sects which these who claim the Christian name are crumbled into, the gross superstitions many of them are intangled in, and the inflexible tenacity with which the grossest of them are held, plainly declare their original, and proclaim the melancholy truth, That they are founded neither on Scripture nor Reason, but the authority and influence of Tradition and custom handed down from one generation to another; and Conscience, we know, will as readily, and rather more, condemn and justify upon the silliest and most absurd trifles, as the weightiest points of religion: which is a sure evidence of the truth of what we hinted before, That Conscience is formed precisely as mens sentiments and opinions are. If then it can be instructed, that there was as much of truth and duty preserved in the current opinions and customs of the world (which may very easily be done) even in times of the greatest ignorance; all that *Junius* himself can pretend to have been designed by the Apostle, will be as well and greatly better answered, than it can be by that chimerical law which he would substitute in the room of the natural one.

But there is another purpose the Apostle has in view, which *Junius* either has not observed, or industriously avoided; for he must be a very superficial Reader indeed, who can miss observing it. No body

who reads the Acts of the Apostles needs to be informed, how tenacious, not only the unbelieving Jews, but even those of them who believed in Christ, were of the Law of Moses; and many of them made a point of it, That, unless a man was circumcised after the manner of Moses, he could not be saved: nor to be informed how vigorously the Apostle Paul opposed that pestilent opinion, not only in his ordinary ministry, but almost in all his Epistles. And particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, it is evident, he makes it one great part of his business, to caution those he writes to against it; by shewing, That the Gentiles, who never had any concern with the Law of Moses, stood as fair for eternal life through the faith of Jesus Christ, as the Jews who had that Law, and yet could not be justified but by that same faith. It is that Law, as it was fulfilled and set aside by him who was the end of the Law for righteousness, that the Apostle speaks of, when he opposes it to the Gospel and faith in Jesus Christ; which *Junius*, either very ignorantly or very perversely, confounds with the Law as it stood before the coming of Christ: the intention of which then was to lead men to Christ, and to keep them shut up unto the faith which should in due time be manifested: as he proves by the Prophet Habakkuk, who must be allowed an authentic commentator, That, even then, it was not by the observance either of the ritual or moral duties of the law, but by faith only, that men were made righteous; for thus both the Prophet's and Apostle's words literally run,—*He that is righteous by faith shall live.*

That this was the Apostle's intention in the whole of his discourse to the Romans, will appear evident enough by the discourse itself; but is put beyond all doubt, by the conclusion of it in the end of the third Chapter; where we find him advancing gradually to this conclusion, That God is the God of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. And as this was a very tender

der as well as a very important point, he manages it with all the address and delicacy so nice a subject required; by showing, first, That Jews and Gentiles were both under sin: and next, that the Gentiles had as good a pretension to the true circumcision as the Jews themselves, and indeed greatly better than most of them; *for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, whose praise is not of men but of God**; † alluding to the original of the name. And as there was no difference in point of sin and guilt, he observes there is as little in point of righteousness. For the righteousness of God, by the faith of Jesus Christ, Comes unto all, and upon all that believe; *for there is no difference.* And in further confirmation that this was his intention, he dwells upon it in the ninth and tenth chapters; and concludes positively, *That there was no difference between Jew and Gentile; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.*

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* Rom. iii. 22. 23 — 29 30. Rom. x 12.

† If the Holy Ghost is there making a supposition, which proceeds upon the righteousness of works; *Junius* must produce a third denomination of Jews specified in Scripture to class the Gentiles among, if by nature they keep the righteousness of the Law; since the Apostle asserts, they may thereby become Jews inwardly. This cannot be meant Jews after the flesh, for he supposes nevertheless their outward uncircumcision may remain. At the same time, they who, if it were possible, fulfil the Law by the obedience of works, cannot thereby be constituted of the spiritual Israel or Jewish nation; for they are composed only of such as become so by the faith of Jesus Christ. *Junius* therefore had acted a little more prudently for himself, if, in support of his modesty, he had settled this point before he had celebrated his triumph over *Tritos*.

Had *Junius* adverted to this, as he ought, when he took upon him to act the Commentator and Critic on the noted passage, as he calls it, in the Second Chapter; he could not have looked upon it as an unnatural construction of the Apostle's words, that they were the Gentile Christians he was speaking of: and he is widely mistaken, when he says it was never heard of before; but though it had not, the fact may be nevertheless very true. For I can direct him to two at least, who thus understood the Apostle, more than a thousand years before either he or the Writer he treats so contemptuously were born, *viz.* *Ambrose* and *Augustine*, who were neither of them contemptible men.

But abstracting from all human authority, which indeed ought to have no weight; I think it as evident as any thing can be, That it is not the blind idolaters, ignorant as they were of the true God and without hope in the world, but Gentile Believers whom the Apostle has especially in his eye. His argument indeed, concerning the righteous judgment of God, will hold of the whole: as God in his providence had so well provided for them all, that, had they loved to retain the acknowledgment of him, and rightly improved the light they had; they might have recovered the knowledge of the truth, even when the tradition was corrupted to the utmost. But that these were Gentile believers, and right Believers, whether before or after Christ's appearance in the flesh, and were real Christians,—will plainly appear by the account he gives of them*: they were such as obeyed the truth, in opposition to such as obeyed it not but obeyed unrighteousness; and, by patient continuance in well-doing, sought for glory, honour, and immortality; such as wrought good; such as were doers or keepers and observers of the law, and had the work of the law written in their hearts; they were the true

* Rom. ii. 7,---11, 14, 15, 26,---29.

true Jews, who had the true circumcision, the circumcision of the heart,---whose praise is not of men but of God ; and accordingly had eternal life, glory, honour and peace, secured to them.

Junius has nothing to alledge against all this, but *Palæmon's* imaginary Law, given for no other end but to give the righteous Sovereign a handle to condemn and punish his creatures ; and the yet more absurd supposition, That the Apostle here, as *Palæmon* had made God to do in the eighteenth Chapter of *Ezekiel*, was amusing those he wrote to, with putting cases such as never did nor ever could happen. He is very severe on the Gentleman he calls *Tritoi* for overlooking the *if*, which the Apostle puts to the Gentiles keeping the righteousness or δικαιοματα of the law. And if that was the case, it was, we may say with confidence, absolutely impossible to fix any conviction on the Jews by it. They had no more to do, but to repeat the Spartan's *if* ; and the whole of the Apostle's reasoning should immediately appear a mere beating of the air ; sound, without any sense or meaning.

But it was impossible the Apostle could say, That the Gentiles kept the δικαιοματα of the law ; for that would infer no less than that they fulfilled it : as it is the same law the Apostle speaks of that *Ezekiel* did. It is indeed the same law ; and bears the same sense too. But it is not *Palæmon's* or *Junius's* law, which either the one or the other speaks of. Sure the Apostle would never advance a proposition that should overturn the whole of that Gospel which he preached, and the whole frame of the constitution of grace, at once. The law he speaks of is the same with the truth : which is only found in Christ. And doing that law, working good, &c. is, in his construction, the same thing with being obedient to the truth. And whosoever, (be it *Palæmon*, *Junius*, *Lucius*, or under whatever name he chuses to go,) presumes to set up any other Law, in opposition to that only one, which

which God has affixed and confined the promise and gift of eternal life to; and to assert, that this very life is to be had by either sincere or even perfect obedience to it; *that man* teaches rebellion against the God of truth, and overturns the truth as it is in Jesus.

What the Apostle says, is plainly this great truth, That when the Gentiles *obeyed the truth*, renounced all other dependencies, and submitted to the righteousness of God as it stands in the constitution of grace; they were the true circumcision, and needed no additional rights to the promised life, either by the law of Moses or any other: and when the later Jews ignorantly separated the Law of Moses from the intent and spirit of it, as *Palæmon* and *Junius* do, the outward circumcision became uncircumcision, a mere mangling of the flesh and no more; *and they only were the circumcision who worshipped God in spirit, rejoiced in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh.*

In this view it will likewise appear, how little reason *Junius* had for the scurrilous treatment he gives *Tritos*; for constructing the *Dikaïomata* of the law, the Apostle speaks of, to comprehend all the institutions of the Jewish law,---not only the moral, but the whole ritual and typical system. Nor does it seem to a disinterested observer any thing amiss to say, as that Gentleman does,---that when the Gentiles observed that manner of worship which was prescribed there, by the intercession of priests, sacrifices, purifications and washings, &c. for pardon and cleansing from sin; so far as they did so, they kept up the types and instituted representations of that only way which God had appointed for putting away sin; and consequently, that their religion was so far the same with Judaism. And what has *Junius* to say against it; especially when himself acknowledges, that the Heathen rites were all of them originally copied from the Divine institutions, however they came in time to be corrupted

rupted and misapplied. The Apostle has told us, that what they offered was offered to Devils; and the Heathen worship is every where represented as an abomination: at the same time that great care was taken to preserve the Divine institutions in purity, and distinct from these abominations. I do not find that *Tritos* denied any thing of all this.

We find the Divine institutions, even where there was what he calls an authentic conveyance, were often perverted and misapplied; and when they were so perverted, declared to be as nauseous and abominable in the sight of God, as *ever* those of the Heathens were; and especially when they were made a sort of screen for the neglect of the other duties of the law. But this misapplication and abuse did not hinder them from being still the same facts and practices, and even to retain their typical nature and significancy, however it might be neglected and overlooked; as we find was the case among the Jews themselves, in our Saviour's days.

Junius borders very near upon that levity, and even prophanity of spirit, which he is so ready to charge upon others,---when he talks of *Typical nut-crackers*, as of equal significancy with these. But when we find him first shamefully perverting the Gentleman's words, and then railing on him in the most contemptuous and abusive manner; can there be a greater sign of a disputant being reduced to the utmost pitch of distress?---All the world are agreed, that when one flies out into a rage, and has recourse to slander and calling names, he is at the end of his argument; or has no more to say in the reasoning way.

But, however that is, we may be fully satisfied,---that there is nothing in the Apostle's expression to oblige one to have recourse to such an absurd and unnatural expedient, as his Law of Nature. And if we admit his gloss on the *If*, which the Apostle puts upon

upon the uncircumcision's keeping the righteousness of the law; by the same reason we must construct his *when*, with which he introduced their doing by nature the things of the Law: both are only suppositions, and suppositions too which never will take place; for *Junius's* Law was given, not to be obeyed, but to convict and condemn the transgressor. And there is an end of all his Scripture-defence; for the Apostle is supposed to say just nothing at all on one side or another, but to state a supposition which never had nor never will have any existence.

To avoid this conclusion, *Lucius* has recourse to a most extraordinary expedient, *viz.* That, by the things of the Law, *τα τε νομ.* which the Gentiles are said to do *by nature* or *naturally*, we are by no means to understand the *δικαιώματα*; that is, I think, the statutes, principles, or commands of it, either of one kind or another; but only one single effect of it,---*By the Law is the knowledge of sin, and the Law worketh wrath.* Need I observe again, that the Apostle in these, and all the similar expressions we meet with in the New Testament, speaks of the Law of Moses as the Jews then used it; a Law which should give life, by the bare observance of the duties prescribed there? It is evident it could not be by the observance of the moral part; for their whole ritual worship was calculate to carry not only conviction, but a confession of the contrary. So that their only hope was in their sacrifices, washings and purifications; while they left out the substantial part, the very end, life and spirit of it, *viz.* faith in the atonement, and living by the free sovereign grace of the Creator and Lawgiver, granted and conveyed in and by the promised Seed. When this was taken in, (and the Law of Moses could not be observed without taking it in), that Law was the very Constitution of Grace. By being obedient to this truth, (the only good and right thing men can do), they not only seek for glo-

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ry, honour and immortality,---but have eternal life. In this plain native light, it is hardly conceivable, how any one should miss the Apostle's meaning; especially when *Junius* himself is forced to acknowledge, that the expression he uses $\tau\alpha\ \tau\epsilon\ \nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$, or whatever $\tau\alpha$ is thus applied to, takes in the whole of what belongs to it unless it; is limited by the context, there is not a shadow of any limitation here: and *Junius* had no more right to assume any other text than *Tritos* had to assume $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omega\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$, which stands in the context, and in a text very evidently designed by the inspired writer, as exactly parallel to this, and asserting the same thing.

However true then it is, and it is most certainly true, That the knowledge of sin is by the law, and that the law worketh wrath; and however just the conclusion from thence may be, That one great end of the law is to convict and condemn the transgressor; (and indeed it was the only thing the law could do, in that partial detached view the Jews held it in); yet it will not follow, that this was the only thing that it was originally designed for, in its subordination and suberviency to the Constitution of Grace; In which view only it is or can be said, with any propriety, to be *The Law of God*,---more than the ritual part which was kept up by the gentiles, could be called so. But what will he make of it when he has it? Dare he say, as *Palæmon* does, that the doers of this law are justified? No, by no means; those the Apostle speaks of, "are a law to themselves, and shew the work of the law written in their hearts: Not indeed by their obedience to it; but by their mutual accusations and apologies, touching the breaches of it."* And again, in his paraphrase, supposed to be addressed to the Jews. "For tho' the gentiles have not the law in the same form as delivered to you, yet they do by nature, $\phi\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota\ \tau\alpha\ \tau\epsilon\ \nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \pi\omicron\iota\omicron\iota$, act the part of the law; That though they have not the

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* Letters on the Law of Nature, p. 10. 17. 24. 25.

“ Law of Moses, they are nevertheless in effect a
 “ Law unto themselves. For observe them only,
 “ when they reproach one another’s vice; or on the
 “ other hand use exculpatory defences to ward off re-
 “ proach, and you will plainly perceive, that they
 “ shew the work of the law written in their hearts,
 “ &c.” And to be fully satisfied of this, he sends us
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“ *Junius*, to be sure, is a sworn enemy to criticism,
 because “ it serves to discourage and awaken envy in the
 “ unlearned, and to lead the wise man, the philosopher,
 “ and critic, to glory in his wisdom,” &c. Very weighty
 reasons these, why *Junius* should declaim constantly against
 all criticisms of persons not of his way; but no reasons
 at all why *Junius* and his friend should not try their skill in
 criticism sometimes, when their matters require it. Let us
 look at one of the specimens of his skill in this art, con-
 tained in the above passage. His uncommon turn that
 way appears, in his finding room for criticism, where no
 person who could read Greek letters, and understood the
 Rudiments of grammar, would ever have discovered an im-
 perfection in the translation; *οὐκ εἰς το νόμον* do the things of the
 Law, or contained in the Law. — But, says *Junius*, *οὐκ* sig-
 nifies, do act and not simply do, *εἰς* a plural article signifies
 the part singular; and so the text should run, “ When
 “ the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do act the part
 “ of the Law.” To have made this excellent criticism
 completely answer the end for which he intended it, he
 certainly forgot to make *εἰς νόμον* signify of the Lawgiver;
 and then the text would have run exactly to his purpose,
 and quite suitable to the illustration he gives of it:— “ The
 “ Gentiles which have not the Law, do act the part of the
 “ Lawgiver and Judge;” for, says the Apostle James, they
 that speak evil one of another (which is the evidence *Junius*
 adduces of the Gentiles having the Law written in their
 hearts) are not doers of the Law, but judges.

If ever consummate impudence appeared in a writer, we
 have it here. He rails at, he exposes, he ridicules *Tritos*, for
 supplying the plural *εἰς* with a substantive (which it must
 have) equivalent to *things*, which the translation uses; and
 at

to the Watermen on the *Thames* and the fish and fruit-women about *Edinburgh*, not in their sober mood, but in the utmost height of passion, Scolding and calling names, Whore, Thief, Liar, &c. and there, he says, we will see the work of the law written in their hearts in a very striking manner. Rob-

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at the very same time he paraphrases the plural *tu, the part*. But this is not all. *Tritos* happens to alledge (what *Junius* will never be able to overthrow), That in fact many of the Gentiles, who had not *Junius's* authentic Revelation, walked and served God in the typical ordinances of the Law; and that, at the same time, the most idolatrous Gentiles held the truth of the atonement in unrighteousness, by their most abominable sacrifices, even as they held the truth of the being of a God in unrighteousness by their most abominable idolatry. But attend to the gloss he puts upon *Tritos's* meaning, in that frantic exclamation, p. 59, of his *Letters on the Law of Nature*: — “Be astonished, ye sons of Hutchinson! who are not quite bereft of sober reflection; some of your brethren, hurried on by zeal to support one of your fundamental maxims, have arrived at such heaven-daring impiety, as to set the abominations of the Heathen on a footing with the statutes of the Most High.” — And pray now *Junius*, if you can, be composed and answer this question: If it were true, that *Tritos* is arrived at the heaven-daring impiety of interpreting, — *doing the things of the Law*, — by the abominable sacrifices of the Heathens; are not you arrived at the very same heaven-daring impiety in support of your fundamental maxim, by interpreting these words, *do the things of the Law*, by all the abominable expressions which rage and malice can dictate to the lawless, whereby they may reproach and revile one another? Superlatively modest *Junius*! here the Reader may pause and contemplate the purity and fervency of your zeal, which grows burning hot against *Tritos*, merely because he does not explain, *doing the things of the Law*, by doing the individually same kind of abominations which you chuse to refer it to. One cannot help reflecting here on the vain-glorious confidence with which, in the close

bers, Smugglers, Adulterers, all sorts of Sinners, some way or other, shew forth the same Law; and we may add, *Palæmon* and *Junius*, yea and *Lucius* too, in their notable Epistles, where they have shown this sort of law deeply written on their heart with as much evidence as the best master or mistress among them. What a cry of prophanity, Atheism and Blasphemy had they raised against a Popular Preacher, or a Hutchinsonian, had they been caught thus punning and burlesquing the Oracles of the Living God!

Junius gives us a rule for fixing the right sense of words and terms which we meet with in scripture, viz. That if it will not suit every text where the same word stands, it cannot be the right one. This perhaps will not hold universally. But there is another that always will; That when any sense is imposed on a particular word, which destroys the writer's main scope and design, and especially if the plain words of the text will not admit of it, we may be sure it is false.

It will not be disputed that the *Doing of the Law*, by which the doers of it are justified, is the same with what in the next sentence he calls *Doing τα τω νομῷ**, and by doing which they shew the work of the Law written in their hearts; their consciences attest-
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close of his Letter, p. 66. he wishes his antagonists might be brought into the field, to expose themselves to his insuperable arms; while he was so infatuated as not to discern himself plunging into that very mire of impiety, which he invokes the *Hutchinsonians* with such extasy to behold *Triton* wallowing in, if they will believe him.

* If the reader attends duly to the force of this observation, he will not only see *Junius*, as pointed out in the preceding note, interpreting this phrase by the practices of the Heathen, as lawless and abominable; but will likewise perceive him
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ing to the truth, and their inward thoughts accusing or apologizing by turns. Here *Trios* adds, "as they pleaded the atonement or not." *Junius* turns this off with a flaunting sneer, as an impertinence not worth his notice; and seems to reckon it a capital absurdity, that the Conscience or reasoning of a christian or right believer should ever accuse him, and yet more condemn him; because, he says, "This employment of the inward thoughts would appear to "to him more suitable to the state of a man's mind "just before, at, or after the commission of some notable crime*." *Palamon* indeed builds all his as-

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* Defence, p. 21.

at the grossest discord with himself. Certainly, *doing the things contained in the Law*, ver. 14. means the same thing with the definition of his supposed obedience of works, ver. 7. 10. and ver. 126, &c. And yet he interpretes these words by the most audacious of all transgressions, not excepting the most abominable idolatry, namely, that of persons setting themselves above the authority of the Law, and assuming to sit on the Judge's tribunal; for so the Apostle James interpretes *speaking evil one of another*.

Let us consider moreover, that by allowing, as we must, the same importance to *when* ver. 14. as *Junius* gives to *if* ver. 26. (touched at above), the whole argument of the chapter is reduced to nothing at all: -- For if it is only "When the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in "the Law, that they are a law unto themselves;" then (by this application of *when*, as he does of *if*, to an impossible case); --- if the Gentiles never do by nature the things contained in the Law, they are not a law unto themselves: And so, unless *Junius* can invent some worthy reason, why ver. 14. should not be stating an impossible case, as well as ver. 26. --- the text, by his rule of interpretation, will prove, that the Gentiles can never be a law unto themselves. And by this means the secret reason why *Junius*, immediately after his solemn exclamation against *Trios*, is obliged to shuffle this text into a gloss referring to more abominable practices than these he charges *Trios* with fastening upon it, is brought to light.

urance of hope and comfort on external actions and ministring love : and looks upon it as a very idle business to be poring on one's heart, and the secret atheism which may be lodged there ; because there neither is, nor can be any there ; his indelible dictates of conscience secure against that. But ordinary Christians, who have not their consciences otherwise engaged, will find so much of atheism there, that they can find no rest in any thing but pleading the atonement.

The Apostle could never mean what our Commentator makes him say, viz. That the Gentiles, believers or unbelievers, showed the work of the Law written in their hearts, or that they were a law to themselves, by a far grosser wickedness, than what he inveighs so bitterly against *Tritos* for, namely, the most enormous violation of the plainest precepts and duties of the Law : And, instead of *doing the Law*, or *the things of the Law*, which the Apostle makes synonymous terms ; doing what, the Apostle James assures us *, is the very reverse of it. *He that speaketh against his brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law ; but if thou judgest the law, thou art no more a doer of the law but a judge.*

His expedient is as silly, as it is impertinent and prophane. These flowers of Billingsgate-rhetoric he builds so much upon, are so far from proving any law but that of corrupt nature written in the hearts of those who use them most fluently, that it does not appear there is any other so much as in their heads. It is not because the things are evil or condemned by the law, that they are bandied about with such bitterness ; but that they are such as import contempt and reproach. And the far greatest part of that sort of eloquence, lies in what has no manner of relation
either

* James iv. 11.

either to religion or morality. Dog, B-tch, Afs, all bad names for defects or infirmities, are rather more current there, than, Whore or Thief; as *Junius* will easily perceive, by listening more attentively to the learned lectures of his great masters. Nay, the time has been, and yet is in some places of the world, when piety, holiness, purity of life, and even the Christian name itself, have been improv'd in the same instructive manner. And I can show *Junius*, where *Palæmon* himself has improv'd piety, devotion, and all spiritual exercises under the name of *heart-work*, against the Popular Preachers, and their followers,---with as much bitterness of spirit, as is to be commonly met with on these occasions. If this is all the evidence he has to produce for his Law of Nature, it will prove just nothing at all; or more properly, that there is really no such thing. Nay, As all these opprobrious terms are no more natural than the language they are uttered in, and the customs they refer to; it should prove that the Law which is shown by them, must have the same original.

But, at any rate, though at the expense of common sense, and contradicting or punning away the express words of the text; *Junius* must say, that the Apostle is here speaking of the Gentiles in general, without any distinction; and concludes them all under sin. The *doing the law*, or *the things of the law*, being, in his opponent's view, much the same thing with keeping the *dicaionomata* of it: he rates *Tritos* at a terrible rate for asserting this in any sense*, "Than
" which, says he, nothing can be more false; and I
" may freely add, scarce any thing more impudently
" so. The Gentiles kept the *dicaionomata* of the law!
" Does our Author imagine, that *Paul* dreamed as he
" does, when he wrote?" Thus he goes on against the poor Gentleman; pouring forth what was written in his heart, with such vehemence, as few of his

* Letters on the Law of Nature, p. 56.

his masters or mistresses are able to come up to. But as the vehemence of their zeal for some one point they have in view, leaves them not patience enough for minding the truth of the case; they very commonly run themselves into most palpable absurdities: And so has it fared with our worthy Author.

According to him, the Gentiles, in a body, are doomed to eternal perdition, without a single exception, until the Apostles preached the Gospel to them; and as it appears from the whole context, that the Jews and Gentiles were exactly on a level, excepting only that the former had an authentic law which made them more inexcusable; all the Jews who lived before that time must fall under the same condemnation.--- I will not impute it to any defect in our Commentator's eye, or any more on his spectacles; it must be owing to something else, that he has not perceived, a thing that lies so very plain in the text; *viz.* That the Apostle very formally states, and keeps constantly in his eye, two very different parties, both among Jews and Gentiles;---those who, by patience in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality;---and those who, after their hard and impenitent heart, treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath: those who obey the truth, and accordingly work good; and those who are contentious, and obey it not, but obey unrighteousness: those who are doers of the Law, and those who are only hearers of it: and, to say all in one word, those who are Jews outwardly, and the circumcision in the flesh, and those who are Jews inwardly, and the true circumcision of the heart. I need not observe again, that the Law, when it is used lawfully, and kept as God has given it,—comprehends the whole Divine constitution, the established order and measure, both of man's duty and God's judgment; which proceed always upon precisely the same principles.

But

But this *Junius* can by no means away with; and no wonder. For this view leaves no room for any law but what is inseparably connected with the grace of the Gospel, and that would destroy the only foundation his system can stand on. On this point, we find *Junius* struggling as for life, under all the signs of distress that can be well imagined. In a fragment, which appears to be stolen out of a letter written by the Gentleman he calls *Deuteros* to a friend; we find three propositions laid down, as the substance of what the Apostle says of the natural knowledge of God, and his Law, viz. "That God's eternal power
" and Deity are invisible, or not to be seen, by the
" bare inspection of the creature;—that nevertheless they are clearly manifested among men;—and
" that the way by which they are clearly manifested
" is, by intelligible *ποιήματα* works which he has
" done; applying the creation to express the revealed knowledge of himself, by figures, and the
" analogy or similitude between material and spiritual truths,—upon which the whole of the language made use of to express spiritual things is
" founded." Those who have ever read the Bible with any degree of understanding, will need no comment on this account of the thing. Had not God revealed himself as Creator, nothing could have been made of the creation,—but what we find was made of it by the most intelligent among the Gentiles, when that truth was lost, *i. e.* to make a god or gods of one part of the universe, to govern and keep the rest in order. But even when that was known, there was no exhibition there of the Divine perfections, such as suited the circumstances of mankind; and by which they could certainly learn what they had to hope or fear from their Creator.

The frame of nature, so far as it went, gave a sort of image, or means by which men might form some conceptions of the spiritual world, and how the creature lives directly upon God there. But this was never

never trusted to alone. The promise of the Seed, and the way of living by him, yea the whole frame of the constitution of grace, was in the world, before there were any men born into it; and sensible representations or figures of spiritual things were, by Divine wisdom, framed into a system of worship; upon which the whole language of Revelation, and all the knowledge we have or can have of spiritual things was founded; which we have no way either of forming or expressing any conceptions of, but by the analogy and similitude of natural or instituted representations and figures. It was not from any such state of nature or meer law, as *Palæmon* and *Junius* imagine, but from this original Revelation of the Constitution of Grace, that the gentiles apostatized. This is shown, by two evidences taken from the Apostle's account of their apostasy. First, That it was such as consisted with all the measures of human wisdom, and the natural exercise of their rational powers; which could never have happened if they had been assured that all things were God's creatures, either by instinct, intuition or reasoning; But men might easily, by the instituted figurative worship, be induced to imagine that God had need of a house, food, &c. And further, that the terms, *eternal power* and *Godhead*, do include, and were designed by the Apostle to include, the whole of the *τε γνῶσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, all that was knowable, or that man needed to know of God. But the knowledge of him must have been very lame, and greatly short of the character of the true God, had not his saving power been included; and if he had not revealed himself, as he does,—in Christ, trinity in unity; God reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.

But when disputants meet with an argument or an objection which will not admit of any answer; what
can

can they do, but try to divert the Reader's attention from it as much as possible. To the Gentleman's first argument, he, very wisely, answers that very thing which he had been ridiculing, and wherein the strength of the argument lies; viz. "That the notion of preparing a house, food, sacrifices, and other things of that kind, never came by the natural discovery of God made by his works, nor yet from human wisdom: It came by tradition, from supernatural Revelation." That the corruption of the tradition was no effect of true wisdom, will very easily be granted; but that these same corruptions were brought in by men *professing themselves wise*, the Apostle says very expressly; and on this founds the apostasy of the Gentiles, with all that followed upon it. What then is the plain language of the whole? Truly, it is the very thing the Gentleman was asserting, viz. That it was from the spirit, intent and meaning of these institutions, that the Gentiles had apostatized; and thereby lost the knowledge of the only proper object, the true God, to whom these services they retained ought to have been addressed.

How *Junius* could imagine any one who had read the Bible could be brought to believe the gentleman had shown any the least distress, by thus commenting on the Apostle's words, is not easy to conceive. But it was his business to treat them as unworthy of any notice. He says, † "he will try their strength a little," and a very little, by what we have seen: it is just as one would try the strength of an enemy, by insulting and railing at some miles distance. "Say yourself, says he to *Protos*, whether ought we to smile or be provoked at this strange forced construction of the Greek word *ποιήματα*?" And where is the force? Why? "But the Septuagint, and
" all

† Letters on the Law of Nature, p. 28.

"all their readers till now, have understood *works* as distinguished from *words*." And dare *Junius*, or any of his accomplices, if he has any, say,---that the great Creator and Sovereign of the universe, his erecting his creation, or such parts of it as he pleased, into a system, a sensible representation or figure of the unseen spiritual world; forming a language upon it, and thereby revealing himself, his mind and will to mankind, was no work? If he dares not say so, how dare he venture to burlesque it with such insolence; by his *cabbage* and *thistle*, and foolish drollery on *transcribers*, *chanters* or *versifiers* of the law? But, of all things, what had the Hebrew language to do there. or *Hutchinson's* philosophy, when there is nothing advanced, but what will hold in any intelligible language in the world. But *let of the abundance of the heart the mouth speak*.

But it must not go so. The power of God unto salvation, that is, the gospel manifested to the heathen, and manifested as early too, as any law could be given; that cannot, must not be.

His way of wrangling, for I cannot call it reasoning, upon this subject,---resembles greatly the short answer given by another paradoxical writer, when oppressed with a multitude of scripture texts, in support of a proposition which he was determined not to admit; "He would not, he said, trouble his readers, or himself, with particular answers; because, if that proposition was in the Bible, the Bible would not be true."

All our author's questions, for he does no more but put queries, tend to the same issue. And as they have in effect been all answered already, I will not either give myself or reader the trouble of repeating: But that he may not boast among his implicit admirers, that the strength of his reasoning, which indeed lies in these queries, has been overlooked; I shall give categorical answers to all I can find of them; and let him make his best of them. Only it must be kept in mind, not only what the world once did know, but what measure

sure of knowledge was in all periods of time maintained and kept up in it; and how much more mankind might have known, had they loved to retain or improve the knowledge of God.

Quer. 1. "Why does Paul, in so many places of his epistles, make such a marvel of the glad tidings he brought the nations, as of a discovery entirely new to them, if God's eternal power unto salvation was already clearly manifested among them before he came?" †

Ans. I know none that made any marvel at all about the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles; excepting the bigotted Jews, who, like our Author, and the other infallible Man at Rome, could not imagine how any could be saved but by joining in communion with them. The Apostle Paul was so far from marvelling at it, that he appears to marvel greatly how any who had read the Prophets, where that event was foretold so plainly, should look upon it as any thing either marvellous or unexpected. The gospel he preached, That Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and that the faith of the worshippers in the ritual way was to terminate in him as the end of all these institutions, was every way as new to the Jews as it was to the Gentiles. The power of God unto salvation might be as clearly manifested among them, as it was among the Jews; while it continued a secret to both who the promised Seed was who should bruise the Serpent's head, and in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Quer. 2. "Why did not the Apostle take the same advantage in persuading the Gentiles, as in his addresses to the Jews? and what hindered him from appealing, in like manner, to the clear manifestation of saving power among the Gentiles?"

Ans.

† Law of Nature, p. 29. 30.

Ans. No doubt he did so with these Gentiles who acknowledged the true God. And his discourses of that kind we find promiscuously addressed to Jews and Heathens in one assembly. But those who were strangers to the true God, were instructed in a way suitable unto their circumstances. None ever asserted that the saving power of God was known to every individual, or even the majority of either Jews or Gentiles: yet we find the Apostle always appealing to external evidence, as established by God for a witness of himself among the nations, but never to instinct or intuition.

Quer. 3. "Must we say, that the Gentiles who had
" among them no such discovery from the heavens
" and the earth of an invisible almighty Maker, as
" was sufficient to convince them of sin for their in-
" gratitude, idolatry, &c. had nevertheless a mani-
" festation of the Gospel, or the power of God unto
" salvation, by means of a clear explicate Revela-
" tion?"

Ans. Mankind were never left by their Creator to gather their knowledge of him from the bare inspection of the heaven and the earth. And by the same means he manifested his eternal power and Godhead, he manifested his power unto salvation. From the time that Adam was driven out of Paradise, Law and Gospel were never separated; the constitution of grace then revealed, included both; and has stood ever since, and will stand for ever the invariable rule of righteousness.

Quer. 4. If there was such a clear explicate revelation, "What shall we make of the many passages describing the darkness that covered the earth when
" the Apostolic Gospel visited the nations?"

Ans. What should we make of them, but let them stand, as they certainly are, a just account of the state of the world at that time; when, *after that in the wisdom*

dom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. But it is to be remembered, that as the Jews had, at that time, almost universally, lost the spirit and intent of their law,---and consequently the true character of the God they worshipped, and the Messiah they expected; they were really never a bit better than the Gentiles, and sunk into as great and real darkness as they,---having nothing left them but *μᾶλλον*, the dead form or image of truth in the letter of the Law. So that if the question proves any thing at all, the conclusion must be, that there never was any such thing as an explicate Revelation of the power of God unto salvation, until the Gospel was preached by the Apostles. For that darkness which the Prophets describe, the Apostle, Rom. iii. 19. after a train of texts describing it, applies it more immediately to them who were under the law, than those who were not under it.

Quer. 5. “ Moreover, must we say, that men are
“ not convincible of sin, but by their neglect of the
“ revelation of Divine mercy? and must we say at
“ the same time, that mercy is revealed only for the
“ relief of Sinners?

Ans. We must say, as God has taught us to say, whether it squares with our favourite notions or not. There is neither any difficulty or any strength in the question, but what is founded on *Junius* and *Palamon's nostrum*, of a law given by the wise Governor of the universe, for no other purpose than to subject all his creatures to his mercy; and that the constitution of grace held forth in the Gospel, is no more but a revelation of mercy to the worst of sinners. *Junius* does not well, to adjust the procedure of perfect wisdom by his little low cunning. It is certain, that all mankind became objects of mercy from the time they became mortal, that is, from the time the present state was fixed by the sentence of the Creator,

before so much as one of them was born. The constitution of grace was exactly suited to their state : and it was exactly calculate, I cannot say to recover, but to raise men up to their right Creature-state, that is, to live purely by the free sovereign grace of their Creator, through Jesus Christ the promised seed, and the powerful working of his Spirit in them and by them ; and thus to recover them from the power of death, and raise them up unto everlasting life. The very nature of sin lies, in attempting to live some other way ; that is, living upon the creature, without God ; or in entertaining a chimerical notion of obtaining the Divine favour and life from him, some other way than by Jesus Christ ; or by entertaining another notion as chimerical, thinking to live by Christ some other way than the efficacious influences of his Spirit, and communication of life from the fulness of it that dwells in him. Upon the whole, unbelief is the root and spring of all sin ; and the only sin which can subject any sinner to the second death.

Quer. 6. “ Why should men be condemned for neglecting mercy, who are not sinners previous-to, or aside from the exhibition of it ; so do not stand in need of it, when it is first intimated to them ? None but the guilty need forgiveness ; the whole need not a physician.

Ans. All mankind are born Atheists ; and the far greater part even of those who stand in the fairest light, and after all the pains taken about them, little better. Let *Junius* find me the man who is no sinner, or has never had any intimations of that goodness of God which should have led him to repentance ; or, in his own phrase, has sinned aside from the exhibition of it ; and his case shall be considered. The question stands upon the same whimsical foundation with the former, namely, That the constitution of grace is nothing but a revelation of mercy, and infers no duties at all.

Quer.

Quer. 7. “ Is there no entrance for sin into the world, but by means of that Gospel which brings deliverance from it : if so, what shall we make of the law on one hand, and faith, grace, and mercy on the other, which is so much insisted on throughout the New Testament ? ”

Ans. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And in that state the God of grace finds all mankind, when he reveals his grace to them. The grand contrast he speaks of, is not between God's law as he gave it, and faith, grace and mercy. He never gave a law that would admit of boasting. That was a law of man's own making ; such as there always have been, and still are in the world, besides *Junius* or *Palæmon's*. It was a corruption of the Law of Moses, a dead image of the truth as it stood in the original institution, which was foolishly imagined to give a title to life by the mere observance of its precepts, without any regard to the spirit of it, in which the truth and the life lay.

Quer. 8. “ Or is there no other law, but what Paul calls the law of Faith ? ”

Ans. No. There is not, nor ever was any other Divine law ; excepting only the national law of the Israelites, by which they held the land of Canaan*.

O 3

Quer. 9.

* The Law was introduced as a tutor and steward of the promise, till the time appointed of the Father, when the heir should enter into possession, and receive the administration into his own hands. Every manifestation, exhibition or institution, made or framed by divine wisdom previous to the coming of Christ, were all ordained to this end, and concurred in the discharge of this office ; as all these were ingrossed into that figurative system, called *the Law*. In this sense, the Law was ordained unto life ; and it will not be easy to prove, that it was ordained of God for any other end ; nor did any of the Jews who considered

Quer. 9. "How comes Paul to speak of Gentiles as
"sinning, and being judged, without law?"

Ans. The Apostle says, They who sin without law,
shall perish without law. And he might well say so:
for whosoever will not live in that only way which
God

ed it in this light, and searched it for the promises, fail of
life.

But, says *Palemon*, the Jews eagerly studied the Scrip-
tures, and yet were disappointed. How does he prove
this? Why, *Rom. x. 21.* the Apostle applies to Israel these
words of the Prophet: *All day long, I have stretched forth
my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* This
indeed proves that they rejected the divine call; but how
it should prove their zeal in studying the Scriptures, it cannot
be easily understood. However, it must be owned that the
Apostle says expressly, "that Israel which followed after
"the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law
"of righteousness." The reason is added; "Wherefore?
"because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the
"works of the Law." They did not search it for the
promise of life, but for life, by the improvement and en-
largement of their own powers and faculties by the assis-
tance of the divine law. What makes this the most dan-
gerous of all delusions, is this, --that it is attended with no
disappointment, till sudden destruction comes upon them.
The Scriptures are able to make all who search them, wise
unto salvation, by the revelation of the divine wisdom and
power of God unto salvation; but they are also capable
of improving and enlarging the intellectual faculties to the
highest pitch; To that every one has reason to fear, lest he
should be searching them only in this view; in which we
cannot be said to be searching for Christ, or for the divine
promise of life eternal; but seeking ourselves, and the en-
largement of our own faculties, &c. We go after this,
like an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of
the stocks, till a dart strike thro' his liver. But because
searching the Scriptures for a wrong end, may be attended
with sudden destruction to those engaged in the search;
ought

God has appointed,---must as certainly perish, as any one of us should certainly perish,---if we take it into our heads, either to live without food, or on any thing else than the appropriate food*.

Quer. 10. "By what rule shall those be judged, who are described as having no written Revelation like the Jews? And why does Paul nevertheless say of such, that they are a law to themselves?"

Ans. Junius explains this at large in his invective against *Tritos*. They are, he says, a law unto themselves, as he moves himself when he walks, or as fishes which have not a buoy are a buoy to themselves; that

ought that to deter us from searching them for Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. The Jews, who studied them for the improvement and enlargement of their natural powers and faculties, fell short of the righteousness of God; but the Jews at Berea, who searched them for a nobler end, to see if Christ whom Paul preached was really contained in them,---had better success, and many of them believed.

* In the verse on which this 9th Query is founded, the Apostle seems to be intimating, that men will at last be judged according to the means of knowledge which they had access to; the Gentiles, who had not access to that system of instruction which Israel was brought under by the constitution at Sinai, should also perish without it. It should not be employed to accuse and condemn them, as will be the case of the people who are under it. *There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust.* The strength of the query lies in a silly quibble on the word *Law*, which, it is plain, is used in that verse to distinguish that peculiar system which Israel was under from the state of the Gentiles. But if *Junius* had looked the context, he would have found the Apostle proving, with the clearest evidence, that the Gentiles who had not the Law of Moses, had means of knowledge sufficient to condemn all abuse of them, as a holding of the truth in unrighteousness.

that is, they are so naturally. But then, as men are taught to walk in the manner they do, there comes to be a very material difference between their walking naturally, and the fishes swimming naturally. But as we have had enough of this already, I shall leave him with the Apostle's answer, That God will judge the secrets of all hearts according to his Gospel. There is one invariable rule of judgment. *Palæmon* nor *Junius* need give themselves no trouble about it. The Judge is wise, and needs none of his advice how to apply it; nor any of his adminicles to help him out; and himself has told us, "That many who are
 " first shall be last, and the last first; and that many
 " shall come from all quarters of the world, and sit
 " down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the king-
 " dom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom
 " are cast out." The Gentiles had not the Law of Moses, nor any authentic conveyance of the original Revelation. But they had the substance of it conveyed in the ordinary natural channel; and we may very safely believe, it was as easy for him to convey the saving truth to whom he pleased, and to withhold it when he pleased,—as it is now with the written Record. We deceive ourselves greatly, when we measure God's ways by ours.

S E C T IX.

Palæmon, Junius, &c. their view of the Law of Nature, not only an attack upon the Divine Sovereignty, but has a direct tendency to atheism. A particular examination of several passages of Scripture regarding the argument.

HITHERTO *Junius* has confined his defence to one text; but, like a wise disputant, would fain have his readers believe that he could easily show how the whole system of Revelation stands upon this single foundation:

foundation: And were the law of nature set aside,
“ We can see, no coherence in the grand scheme of
“ the Scriptures, we can have no distinct or satisfac-
“ tory notion of the Divine grace revealed there, no
“ just view either of sin or righteousness; yea the
“ necessity of Revelation disappears: and moreover
“ a high road is paved to downright atheism. But
“ the voice of nature, however much depressed by cor-
“ ruption, has hitherto defeated all the arts of philo-
“ sophers.*” What shall one say to such a *rhodomonto-*
tado? Many an experiment human wisdom has made,
in order to mould the system of Revelation, and the
measures of Divine government, to the taste of the
men of the world, and what they call righteous and
sapiential government; and nothing would answer,
until they divested, or got the Creator to divest himself,
of his true character; to renounce his sovereignty,
and assume the character of a moral governor, by go-
verning his creatures as the Kings of the earth do their
subjects, on the principles of what we call justice and
equity between man and man. In this manner we
have seen the boldest and most peremptory decisions
given, what God may and may not do. What is cal-
led the gross Pelagian system, though it has been ge-
nerally rejected by those who profess to form their sen-
timents upon the Bible, is really the only rational and
consistent one of the deistical kind, and of the number-
less intermediate ones, (until we come back to pure so-
vereignty, the only measure which becomes the dig-
nity of the wise Creator), or all the expedients that
have been tried to make what they call a righteous
moral government and sovereign grace hang toge-
ther,—are mere patch work; like the iron and clay in
Nebuchadnezzar’s image, which can never be united
into one solid mass. And strange it is how it should
ever have entered any one’s head to adjust the Crea-
tor’s government upon a measure which can have no
being, but where the subject has some property and
certain

* Letters, p. 38.

certain rights independent of the Sovereign: When we know that, by the original law, the direct and immediate result of creation,—no creature can subsist a moment but by the mere grace of the Creator, and the exertion of his supporting power; that it has nothing, can have nothing, neither power nor possessions but by his free gift; and that men, and all that they very thoughtlessly call theirs, are his perfect and absolute property. By all the rules of justice, he may do what he will with his own. And strange! very strange it is! that, because an arbitrary, weak, imperfect, and I may say, foolish being, such as men are, is a bad character; it should be deemed such a horrible thing to say, that the perfectly wise Creator is an arbitrary Governor; and that any one should pretend to reduce his supremacy, to the measures of a limited monarchy. But it should be always remembered, that he gives no account of any of his matters.

But of all I ever saw attempt the daring task, *Palæmon* and *Junius* appear to me the most unaccountable and inconsistent. While, on one hand, they carry the Divine Sovereignty quite beyond the bounds himself has set to it, and the measures he has established in his constitution of grace; yet he cannot be allowed the character of a righteous Governor and Judge, unless he does, what it appears with all the evidence both of sense and reason, he has not done, viz: implant indelibly on every man's heart, the knowledge of himself and his law; such as, without more ado, shall enable him to determine infallibly what is good and what is evil. Upon this not only precarious, but palpably false supposition, the very being of Revelation itself, and all religion, is made to depend. It is one of the well known arts of the enemies of Revelation, to take it off the only foundation on which revealed religion can stand, that Spirit and divine power, the peculiar evidence and distinguishing characteristic
of

of the word of God *; to set it on some other bottom, where it cannot possibly support itself.

Natural religion has been long asserted the only proper rational foundation, (and so long as they meant no more by it, than what all who know what they are saying mean, namely, such measures of knowledge, as have been, or may be attained by natural means, without building directly on written Revelation, something may be said for it.) But when all Tradition and Information or Instruction are expressly excluded, and every man confined to his own breast, and what he can find of God there, with all the impressions external objects and the course of things can make; if that is not the direct road to atheism, or, which is much the same, natural idolatry, I must declare myself absolutely incapable of judging in these matters. And the progress is so extremely natural, and so approved in the experience of all ages;—that the conviction comes the nearest to *Junius's* intimation of any thing I know, hardly excepting self-evident propositions.

One needs no more but open his eyes and see what passes about him; or, if that is too much, reflect but a little upon himself, or try what he can thus make of God and the spiritual world; and he will very quickly perceive where he would land, if left to himself.

We can easily perceive how a child's affection is caught by the first gaudy trifle that presents itself. He will cry bitterly for the loss of a bauble, while the loss of father and mother, and all that men reckon of the greatest moment, gives no manner of uneasiness. The wisest of us, if our pride would permit us to perceive it, are but great children; we act precisely upon the same principles. — Whatever happens to please us, we treat as we should do our God; and may very properly be said to worship it; for love is the only proper worship. After all that we have heard of God, and the spiritual world; the present has the entire heart of most men, and a very large share of it in the best. What would
have

* Jer. xxiii. 28 29.

have been the state of our minds, had we never heard of any thing else? Observation would have convinced us of the shortness of our own powers; and that there were some invisible causes of the changes we perceive; but what these causes were, who could say; when we see all depends on the Sun's nearness and distance? The caution Moses was directed to give to the Israelites*, appears extremely proper: It was given by him who perfectly understood the human constitution: It was approved by experience: The worship of the heavens was the first idolatry, and the spring of all that ever was in the world; until men sunk into such a degree of brutality, as to worship they knew not what.

That the love of a present world, is naturally the ruling principle in man, appears evidently enough from experience; and is yet more confirmed by that strong connection we have with it, and dependence we have on it, by our bodies; which make so great, and the only sensible part of us in our present state, that it is hard to say, if ever the generality of mankind had reckoned the thinking part any different substance, if they had not been taught it: In so much that we find *Palæmon* himself asserting that man is naturally made for a present world. But we have greatly better authority than his. The whole tenor of the Divine Oracles holds forth a competition between God and the world who should have the heart of man — In the history of the world, but especially that of old Israel, the world appears to have so much the ascendant, that the most striking appearances of Divine Majesty and power, intermixed with the most endearing displays of goodness, could not prevail to fix that people on God's side. They never turned to him; but by some force or constraint; and, in a very little time, returned to their old buoy†. In the New Testament we have this yet more plainly attested. All our Lord's and his Apostles discourses proceed upon this supposition, and are levelled directly against this ruling passion; and which no-
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* Deut. iv. 19. † *Biafi*. *Junius's* natural buoy.

thing can cure but what *Palæmon*, not improperly, but very inconsistently with his favourite plan, calls a *new instinct*, viz. the constitution and tendency of the new creature, *Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* And even *these who were so*, the Apostles found it necessary to caution strongly against this great evil. But we may not enter upon particulars.

Junius will probably say upon this, what he says to *Protes* on another such occasion, That this indeed argues a great defect in the principle of righteousness, and that human nature is greatly corrupted; but says nothing against their knowledge of the Law. This we shall take notice of by and by. But the argument I was just hinting, or if any body pleases to call it a presumption, is not designed directly against any natural knowledge of a law, and of our proper behaviour of one toward another; but the natural knowledge of God, and of the worship due to him: and to shew how unlikely, (I may say impossible) it is for a creature made for this world, that is, for living upon the creature, finding the matter of all his enjoyments and pleasure there; for such a creature, so made, and so situate as man is, to look any further; and especially to look for another being, and an invisible world, where the way of living and all the gratifications, supports and enjoyments of life, are not only vastly different from, but directly opposite to the present. It is nothing against this to say, That nature is corrupted. May one ask, what is it corrupted from? It will likely be said, from the integrity of the human nature as it subsisted in paradise. But that ceased whenever sin entered, and is no more. This is the present state of nature: The state which all mankind are and have been in, since it was fixed by the sentence of the great Sovereign. We have indeed presented to our faith a more perfect standard of human nature, than Adam's was, in Jesus Christ: and the

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great design of the constitution of grace, is to raise all who believe in him to a conformity and likeness to him. But this is not, yea cannot be done, by any natural means or law whatsoever; but by a new creation: by the utter destruction of that life we have from Adam, breaking our connection with a present world entirely, and resolving our bodies into dust; and by raising them again spiritual and glorious bodies. As far as any one is a right Christian, *His old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed*; and his business is to *deny himself, to take up his cross, and follow Christ*: not in the self-denied labour of ministering love alone, which *Palæmon* builds so much upon; ---but homologating what Christ did in the name of all believers; and so, in the faith and hope of the promised life, renouncing and giving up the life on which the curse of the law rests, into the hands of justice, to be destroyed by death, and thus to be made conformed unto Jesus in his death; the only way by which we can be made conformed unto, or planted into the likeness of his resurrection.

In the midst of all the affected zeal *Palæmon* and *Junius* show against the corruptions of the true Apostolic Christianity, they hold most tenaciously the capital one, the root from which all the rest spring; and which, could it be effectually destroyed, all the rest would die of course. It is the love of a present life, strongly connected with the enjoyments of it; and running into the love of the world. I have no doubt *Palæmon* will reject the imputation with as much earnestness as Hazeel did the Prophet's, and yet it appears to lie very deep in his heart. What is the great point all his zeal and labour tends to? The very spirit of the whole plan breaths and betrays, nay, professes great earnestness to accomplish an impossible task, viz. To raise a child of Adam to the dignity of a child of God, and graft immortality on
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the forfeited life we derived from Adam ; and thus to make the threatening and curse of the Law an empty thing. But it will be said, that Christ has taken away the curse of the Law, being made a curse for his people. Let none presume to falsify the word of the God of truth. The Apostle says a great truth, That Christ has delivered them from the curse of the Law ; but no where does he say, that he has divested it of its cursing power. Nor does he deliver any totally from it, until it has had its effect, by death ; and an end is thereby put to that life men are naturally so fond of. It was no part of our Lord Redeemer's business, to restore man to the possession of that life which Adam lost ; but to provide him in another, in all respects infinitely preferable to it. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; nor corruption inherit incorruption.*

Upon this view of human nature, *Tritos* founds an argument,---which will certainly have great weight with every man, who has a greater regard to the Testimony of God than to his own darling conceits. The first view we have given there, whatever *Junius* may pretend, is absolutely decisive. *The imagination of men's heart is only evil continually.* Words cannot be conceived more comprehensive and strong to express what the Apostle Paul says in other words ; *In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing :* and the inference *Tritos* makes, appears as necessary as any consequence that can be drawn, viz. " That the heart of man can never be productive of a law which is holy, just and good." And how does *Junius* turn it off ? I will not give a name to it : " And thus we are taught, that wickedness can never be productive of remorse." Should one say it never can, but in the light of the Divine law, durst he say it could ? But whether it could or not, what is this to the purpose ? Or does he mean to say, that the figments or productions of man's heart are sometimes

(he must say often, in order to serve his purpose), very good. *Tritos* had likewise taken notice of what the Apostle says in his own name *, *That he had not known sin but by the law*. Sure this says as plainly as words can do, *That*, had he been left to himself, with all the supposed natural impressions and dictates of conscience, he had been quite at a loss in this capital point; and he says no more than what has been verified in the wisest of men, and the most polite and civilized nations, who did not know that the grossest and most unnatural wickedness was sin †. In this light, *Junius* must have found it too hot for his handling: and to divert the Reader from it, falls a punning on the context; and makes him say, that Paul knew nothing of the law or sin, all the while he was sitting at the feet of Gamaliel.

Tritos had adduced a number of other texts, and particularly that home-thurst at his law of nature given by one of Job's friends; ‡ *Vain man would be wise, tho' he*

* Rom. vii. 7. † Job. xi. 12.

‡ Whenever the wisest philosophers and lawgivers moralized beyond these actions which were self-evidently for the advantage of society in general, and for the support of different plans of government among different politic bodies in particular; whenever they launched beyond these, I say, we do not find that the wisest among them determined, that the grossest impurities, by which society was not hurt, were certainly vices. Yea, they sometimes converted vices themselves into virtue, when the plan of government (the supporting of which by all possible means, seems to have been their only certain standard of right and wrong) in their apprehension demanded it. It is very remarkable, that he who is called, tho' I think falsely, the loosest of the poets, seems to have been a better moralist than many of the wisest philosophers. *Ovid* every where expresses his detestation of vices, which were authorized by the example of philosophers; who have been recommended by some from the pulpit, as patterns of every virtue to Christians.

he is born like a wild asses colt. And he might have added many more, and particularly the four which our publisher has placed on his title-page. But this, and all the rest, he wisely passes over; because the Gentleman had put an *especially* on that noted text of the Apostle, † *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,---neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Nothing can be more evident than that the Apostle is there stating the great point, which he never loses sight of in all his writings, namely,---that, until man has been taught of God, he is ignorant of every thing that concerns the spiritual and eternal world; and until he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, can have no taste or relish of any thing, but the things of the flesh. In this view, it must be a very absurd thing to imagine, that every man, even from his mother's womb, carries the knowledge of God and his law written upon his heart; especially when, in the very passage on which the defence is pretended to be founded, the Gentiles in general are described as absolutely destitute of the knowledge of the true God, and substituting the grossest absurdities in his room; and, at the same time, so blind, as not to be able to perceive the evil of the most notorious sins. But as this same *Junius* is a great master of hocus-pocus tricks, he slyly slips his own fool's-coat upon *Tritos's* back; and makes him say, that these men the Apostle speaks of had no more knowledge of any thing than they brought from their mother's womb; and laughs heartily at the ridiculous figure he makes. But he leaves him not so. In summing up the argument, *Tritos* had not expressed himself perhaps with all the accuracy that was necessary to protect him from the lash of a malicious critic. But any candid reader will easily perceive the strength of it: That when the whole uniform tenor of the divine testimony attests, in the strongest manner, the blindness, ignorance, and atheism of the natural

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† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

tural man, the ψυχικὸς ἀνθρώπος; the man who has no more about him than the image of the first man, who was made *εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*, which we render a *living soul*: It cannot be the Apostle's design, who spoke by the same Spirit, to say that every man had the indelible knowledge of God and his law, naturally written upon his heart. This, as *Triton* had intelligibly enough expressed, he, with great confidence, undertakes to uphold a most compleat piece of nonsense; and so he is confuted.

This expression of *Writing upon the heart*, one would think, should have led such an exact commentator as *Junius* to compare this text with such others as the same phrase is found in: For himself has given this rule, "Those who would give the sense of Paul in one place, shou'd endeavour to make it consistent with his sense in another." And the reason of it will hold as good with the whole Scripture or testimony of God. And I believe it will hold, that wherever this expression is used, it signifies putting something there which was not before; and that what is said to be written, is really put there. When the Apostle says the Corinthians were his Epistle-commentatory *written in their hearts, known and read of all men, the epistle of Christ written with the Spirit of the living God*: Paul's divine commission was read there, sealed with that Divine Seal; which would be but ill shown by such evidences as *Junius* instructs his Law of Nature by. But when we find the great promise of that new and better covenant, of which Jesus is the Mediator and Surety, expressed by that same phrase, both by the prophet and the Apostle; this gives it a sacredness which ought not to be prostituted in that shameful manner our commentator has done; nor explained by the ribaldry of watermen and fish-women, robbers and Smugglers. In vain will he plead, that it is not the law, but the work of the law, that is here said to be written in the heart. Is it the
work

work of the law to judge and malign one another, to scold and call names? That would be to make the breaking of the law, in the most outrageous manner, the work of the law. The work of the law must be the work of God, whose law it is : and surely no man in his wits would ever have constructed it otherwise, if he had not been desperately hard put to it, to maintain some darling point ; dearer to him than the honour of God and his law.

What I principally intended by taking notice of this great promise, of writing his law in the heart,--was partly to repress *Palæmon's* vanity, who would fain have us to believe, that God does nothing in the conversion of a sinner but sending the merciful truth, or notifying to him the atonement ; and especially to remove his foolish assertion of a law naturally impressed on our very frame and constitution. Surely we may conclude, that the perfectly wise God would never have inlaid a promise in his covenant with such solemnity, if what he promised to do was already done ; and all that remained to be done was, as *Palæmon* tells us, to clear up the half-defaced natural dictates of Conscience.

Tritos had further adduced our Lord's declaration, † *That no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him* : Which we find repeated by the Evangelist John in other words, but the same sense : *No man hath seen God at any time ; the only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*. This *Junius* sees fit to take no notice of. And astonishing it is, that it should be so little noticed by our natural Theologers who profess to be Christians ; who set out boldly on the presumption, that they can declare God. But *Junius* outdoes them all ; for he asserts roundly, that every man knows him as naturally as he eats and drinks, or propagates his species ; nay, and that he has seen him,

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† Matth. xi. 27.

for he knows him by intuition : At least, he has no more to do but open his eyes and look about him, and shall see him as clearly and fully as the beloved Son himself can declare him ; excepting only the salutary or merciful truth. But that, tho' it is not all, nor any thing near all that ought to be excepted, yet is a very great matter ; and without which the true God cannot be known. The most that can be made out by the wisdom of man, is not the knowledge of God ; but the same sort of labour the prophets rebuke with such earnestness: viz. the erecting a philosophical idol, or the visionary phantom of an enthusiastic rhapsodist.

The Apostle writing to the Hebrews, among the many instances he gives for illustrating the nature of that faith which is the substance of (gives a subsistence to) things hoped for, and the evidence or conviction of things not seen ; gives us this among the first : *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear**. When one compares this with the account we have given by the text in question, how the invisible things of God come to be perceived or seen in his works, where we have the same word ; that is, how these works are *νοηματα*, understood : The answer is close to the point ; By faith we understand, *νοούμεν*, that the worlds are *ποιηματα* made things,---and made by the word of God. This is one of these *unseen things*, and the fundamental one, which faith gives, or, more properly, is the evidence and conviction of : And faith is a quite different principle, both from the reason of the philosophers, and our Author's visionary intuition. *Junius* could not be ignorant, that this use had been made of the text. To have attempted to answer the argument directly, he might likewise have known, was

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* Heb. xi. 3.

a task above his pitch; as indeed it cannot be answered, but by such a comment as shall destroy the text. He therefore slyly brings it into his reader's view; in a manner that shall divert his attention from it; and fix it upon something else; but has not seen proper to say *what*. *Protos*, it seems, had charged him with some disrespect to Moses: To which he answers, "Nor am I in any fear of undervaluing Moses;—
 "While I acknowledge with Paul, that I learn from
 "him what I could never have learned from nature,
 "to wit, That the worlds were framed by the word
 "of God, † &c." Whether he has adverted to it or not, he has fairly renounced the only colour by which the text can be explained away, *viz.* That the same truth may be at once the object of faith, and of natural knowledge. He says, what he learns here from Moses he could never have learned from Nature; And what is it he learns? If he learns from Moses and the Apostle, it must be what the Apostle says, *That the worlds were framed by the word of God*: And that unquestionably refers to the account which Moses gives of the exertion of Divine power, commanding the universe into being, and the order which we now find it in.

What notion he has either of Moses or the Apostle's words, he has not condescended to tell us. But by the solemn air he assumes, and his dark mysterious way of speaking, which, in a Popular Preacher or Hutchinsonian, he would call "Solemn impertinent cant;" I suspect he would have us think, that the Apostle is here only asserting, very darkly and covertly, that great truth, which we find often plainly and strongly asserted in the New Testament, and particularly in the first chapter of this epistle, *viz.* That all things were created by that Divine person who, I think, in John's writings only, bears the name of the *Word*. But our commentator should have observed, that the only word he uses for that purpose is

λογος;

αἰών; and never even that, without the demonstrative and emphatical article ὁ prefixed to it: but that is word of a very extensive signification, and very different from *πῦρ*, which stands in this text, without any article too; and which is never used but to signify something said or spoken. And even though it might be, as it never is, applied to signify a person; the Apostle has effectually precluded the exception pretended to be founded on it, by the use of that point of faith which he directs us to in the latter part of the verse: which we find he applies, to obviate what he knew was a very common imagination; That one part of the universe was framed and modelled by another, which they called Nature. This, the Apostle gives us to know, can never be sufficiently guarded against, but by faith; or the belief of a Divine Testimony concerning a fact, which we had no other way of coming to the knowledge of, such as all unseen things are. And when we find in the same Context, the very Being of God, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, made a matter of faith, that is, depending on a Divine testimony; he must be a bold man indeed, who dare take upon him to say as *Palæmon* does,---that we might have known all this, tho' there had never been a word of Revelation either spoken or written.

But, after all that reason and Revelation can say against it, *Junius* stands determined to hold what he holds with the utmost tenaciousness. And there is something so particular, and such true cant, in his concluding declaration, that nothing but his own words can give a just idea of it.

After having shown forth very plentifully the law written in *his* heart, by all the noise and bluster impotent rage commonly suggests, in his Letter against *Trinitarians* and the *Hutchinsonians*; all of a sudden, he assumes the airs of a very humble self-deny'd believer, but holds still to his point. "In fine, (says he) I am
" so well satisfied with the testimony of Paul, that I

" see

“ see no reason to be greatly moved either way, by
 “ what *Cicero*, *Voltaire*, the late book called *Sophron*,
 “ or any other ancient or modern, can say either for
 “ or against it. For it will be abundantly sufficient for
 “ *such a one as I*, to be taught to hold fast the faithful
 “ word; though during the contest about it, I should
 “ be obliged to let go every thing else.” A comment
 on this like some others, would only serve to darken
 the text. He has found a text which has the words
Law and Nature in it, and which speaks of some Gen-
 tiles who, without the Law of Moses, do *ta te vous*,
 and have the work of the law written in their hearts;
 and he is determined to maintain that all mankind have
 the same Law written in their hearts; but written in
 such a very particular manner, that it cannot be shown
 but by the most enormous transgressions of it. But
 our resolute Doctor would do well to consider, what
 he would have said to the Anthropomorphite Monks
 of Egypt, had he lived in their time; who came not
 with a single text, as he does, but with what they would
 call the whole current of the sacred Writings, assert-
 ing, That God had all the members of a human body.
 What will he say to those who maintain transubstan-
 tiation, and produce our Lord’s express words for their
 warrant? He and they are on pretty even terms; for
 they resolve as stiffly as he to hold fast the faithful
 word, as they will call it: and indeed both he and
 they are forced to let go every thing else, in holding
 it as they do. There never was any the absurdest opi-
 nion advanced, but some word of truth was alledged
 for the foundation of it. Yet however infallible he
 may imagine himself, he will find it very hard to bring
 the world to believe it.

To conclude; as our Author has expressed a keen
 desire for an antagonist*, I am persuaded he will find
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* I know not what views our Author may have, in
 the great eagerness he has shown for having some one or
 other

in the preceeding sheets abundance to exercise his thoughts, and his pen too. But, before he begin, I would advise him for his own sake, as well as that of others, That he would so far reconcile himself to *heart-work*, as to look into his own; and examine, if there is no personal malice or envy, and no-party spirit lurking there. His conduct hitherto is extremely suspicious. Why single out ASPASIO and his friends, to expose them to all the contempt and abhorrence of mankind---that his skill in rallery and defamation can compass! They, by his own acknowledgment, assert very warmly all the doctrines of the Gospel. If they were in any thing mistaken, ought he not to have tried to convince them in the spirit of meekness? and dare he say they err wilfully? Why that bitterness of spirit against the Hutchinsonians? By all appearances, they love the Gospel of Christ. Perhaps they do not understand it perfectly; but no more did Apollos himself, when Aquila and Priscilla took him under their care. Will not the world say, that these are the men who are likest to make a competition with him, and his church or churches? But will they not likewise say, that he acts very unwisely, thus to vent his resentment? And as railing and buffoonry is no reasoning, will not all men of sense conclude, that it

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other to write and print; which he has repeated, I know not how often, in a manner that forced upon my fancy the issue of a very instructive conference in his way, between two very accomplished Mistresses in his Law of Nature. After they had for a considerable time "shown forth the work of the Law written in *their* hearts, in "a very sensible and striking manner," and exhausted the ordinary topicks in that sort of eloquence; one of them, I know not on what motives, when it came to her turn, made no reply. The other, having waited for some time with great impatience, at last cried out, very much in our Author's spirit,---"Speak B---tch, that I may get "something to say."

is for want of reason and argument, that he has recourse to these scandalous methods?

The Author of the Letters has put a black mark on a self-sufficient censorious disposition, when he thinks he finds it in the men he hates. But where can the writer, nay, where can the man be found, who has shown half so much of both as he has done in his Epistles? Will not men who have no concern in these parties, be tempted to say,---*Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, ere thou pretend to pull the mote out of thy neighbour's.*

But, however that may be, it will be much his interest to consider, more seriously than he yet seems to have done, these very significant words given us by himself, speaking of the creation: "Man was last formed, and he was made for hearing the voice of God; he was so made, that his life was incomplete, until he heard that voice: Incomplete we may say, for want of a better similitude, like a dial before the sun has shined upon it. He was fitted as the wax to the seal, for receiving the impression of the Divine Word." He would do well likewise to carry along with these---the text our Lord defeated the Devil's grand temptation with; which will give him a difference between men and beasts, incomparably better than all he has pitched on; *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

And if he will write, I believe I will not be singular in my wish,---That he would give us less of his zeal, and more knowledge; less of his wit, and more judgment; less mirth and drollery, and more reason; and less of his own wisdom, but more of the wisdom of God.

F I N I S.



